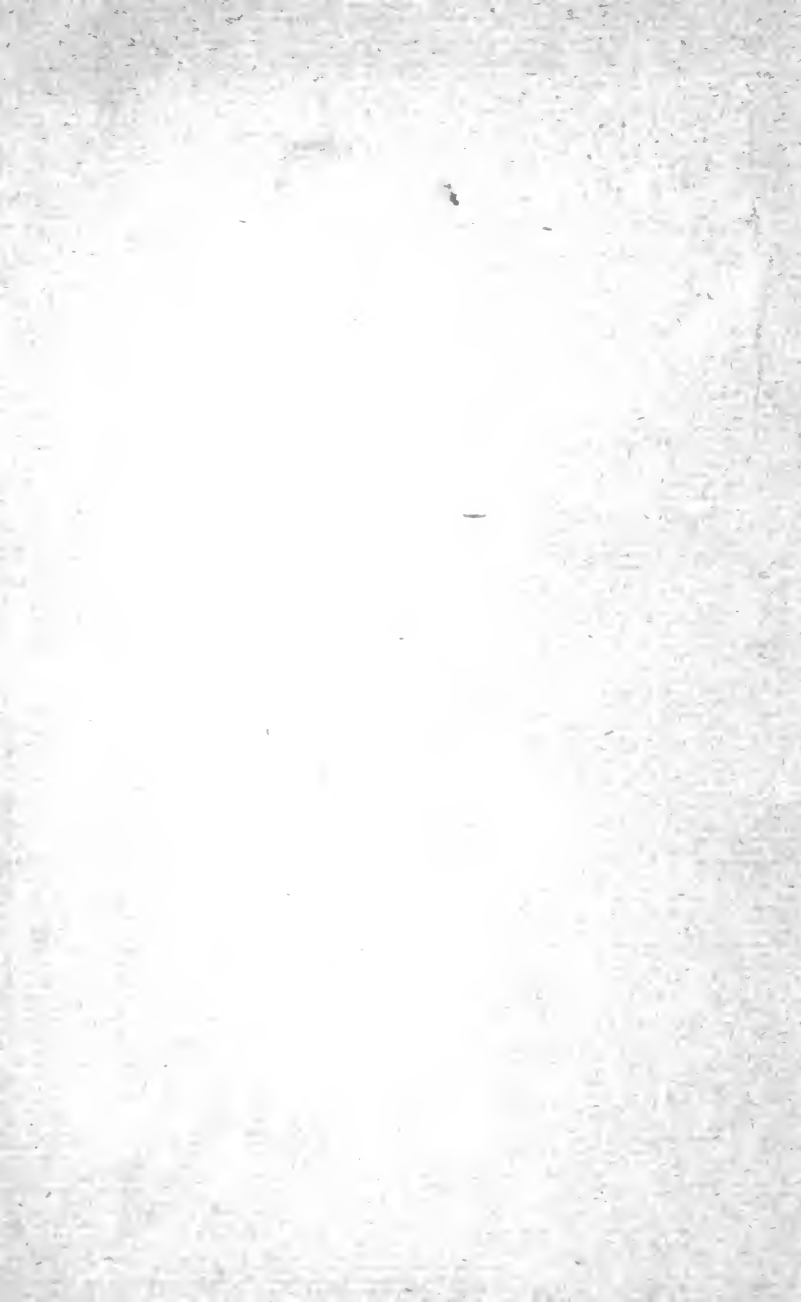




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LIFE OF LORD  
CHESTERFIELD







*By Hoare, R.A., Pinxt.*

PHILIP, FOURTH EARL OF CHESTERFIELD  
*From a Picture in the National Portrait Gallery*

# LIFE OF LORD CHESTERFIELD

AN ACCOUNT OF THE ANCESTRY  
PERSONAL CHARACTER & PUBLIC  
SERVICES OF THE FOURTH EARL  
OF CHESTERFIELD. BY W. H. CRAIG  
WITH TWENTY-EIGHT FULL-PAGE  
ILLUSTRATIONS    ❧    ❧    ❧    ❧    ❧



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## PREFACE

**M**Y reason for adding to the already overcrowded list of writings on Lord Chesterfield is the wish to present him in a light which, however essential to his reputation, has been hitherto comparatively ignored.

Whilst enough—nay, more than enough—attention has been given to his private life and correspondence, to his wit, his *savoir faire*, his peculiar system of practical ethics, his sallies into the field of literature, his theory of the “Graces,” and his various questionable proclivities, too little, as it seems to me, has been devoted to the consideration of those rarer and higher qualities which distinguished him as a valuable public servant to whose ability, zeal, energy, political foresight, incorruptibility, and dexterity England is more indebted than she appears to recognize at present.

With a view to bringing these latter qualities into prominence, I have purposely avoided dwelling on the former, save where the necessity of preserving continuity of narrative obliged me to notice them; and even then have refrained from criticism, which has fallen into abler hands.

That I may be accused of undue temerity in venturing to reopen a case upon which the world in general had already made up its mind is very likely, and if so, I can

only plead in extenuation that, so far as in me lay, I have tried to deal impartially with the evidence before me.

Where that evidence seemed to me conclusive that Lord Chesterfield's conduct in any particular case was meritorious, I have not scrupled to say so; and where, in my opinion, it shows the reverse, have been equally outspoken; whilst I have throughout endeavoured to preserve silence, or strict neutrality, with regard to actions not bearing the stamp of his individuality, or for which he cannot fairly be held responsible.

W. H. C.



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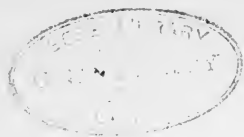
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# LIFE OF LORD CHESTERFIELD

## INTRODUCTORY

### AN IMPRESSIONIST SKETCH

**I**T is a "field-night" in the Assembly Rooms at Bath some hundred and sixty years ago. The tables in the card-room are crowded—both those small ones at the side, where silence for the most part prevails, and the long hazard-table in the centre, which is surrounded by a less reticent, though perfectly orderly, throng. Players and spectators are of nearly every size, age, and figure known among men; but most have a certain air of distinction. Some are in the gorgeous evening dress characteristic of fine gentlemen during the first half of the eighteenth century, with orders and ribands on their breasts. Others, and these not the least distinguished-looking, are in the quiet garb of country squires. Some are calmly taking snuff as they watch the turns of luck; some see their stakes disappear with a well-bred smile; others take their winnings with an air of resignation. Only a small minority, and these not of the best *air*, vent their triumphs, or disappointments, in gestures or language indicative of their feelings. Yet under all the best-bred restraint of demeanour nature somehow asserts itself, and

the countenance, by signs only perceptible to the experienced, betrays the emotions of the heart.

From a corner of the room two persons contemplate the scene with a difference of interest that must strike any one who is watching them. The younger of the two, who is in his *première jeunesse*, betrays by his wandering glances and eager attention to what is going on both interest and curiosity, though from his remarks upon the varying fortunes of the game at the central table one may easily perceive that the youthful nobleman, for such he is, has thrown many a *main* in his time. His lordship has, in fact, only just arrived in Bath; and having a passion for play, has lost no time in making his way to the Rooms. Heaven knows what might have happened to him there if a guardian angel had not crossed his path in the shape of the companion who quietly throws in a word of advice from time to time, whilst pointing out the most salient characteristics of a scene to which he himself is no stranger. Let us take a look at this latter person as he plays the, to him, congenial rôle of Mentor to inexperienced youth.

At a glance one can tell that he is no ordinary man. The *bel air*, a little overdone perhaps, diffuses itself placidly over his short, rather squat figure, as he stands in a posture which, as though arranged by a portrait-painter or dancing-master, is somewhat too artificial for absolute grace. Roughly speaking, we should take him to be four or five and thirty. Not a handsome man, at least of no virile beauty; but with an unmistakable look of power and distinction. His figure is the worst of him, being too coarse and stunted for the pale, intellectual face that surmounts it. The forehead high, but somewhat narrow. The eyes, keen, dark, cold, are surmounted by thick, arched, black eyebrows giving a peculiar character to the face which at once arrests notice. The orbital cavities are very large, as we often find them in men born to command, or gifted with eloquence. The nose thin, aquiline, prominent; not



so beak-like as that of the elder Pitt, but belonging to the same nasal order. The mouth—ah, there is an enigma! Not a badly shaped mouth by any means, with firm, well-cut lips; a mouth seemingly formed to utter what is likely to have a reservation behind it; not an ill-natured mouth, yet looking as though its owner could be very cruel if he chose; a mouth too proud for falsehood, yet whose formulated curves suggest a preference for artifice; a prim mouth, which looks as though it could be mobile only when it sneered. The chin is neither small nor wanting in firmness, but inclined rather to the pointed shape than to that honest squareness indicative of the Saxon type. Altogether a powerful and not ignoble face, though scarcely that of one whom at first sight we should choose for a friend. It smiles, and reveals teeth sadly discoloured between the parted lips. A patch or two of court-plaster, dexterously placed, enhance the modish pallor of the smiling yet joyless countenance, and a perruque of rigid and complex structure lends dignity to the wearer's aspect, whilst at the same time adding a fictitious height to his otherwise dumpy figure. That figure is clad in the ornate evening dress which fashion then demanded—a peach-coloured velvet coat garnished with bullion in various devices, the cuffs edged with deep ruffles of costly Mechlin, whereof a loosely-tied cravat surrounds the wearer's throat; a wondrously-embroidered waistcoat of luminous material, traversed diagonally by a broad blue riband, and descending low upon breeches of dull-coloured satin, which end in legs of rather clumsy model, encased in silken hose, having thereto attached large, though not unshapely, feet inserted in high-heeled pumps, and crossed on the instep by huge buckles that glimmer with a hundred twinkling lights. A gorgeous star on the left breast might lead a credulous beholder to conclude that the wearer is one whom the King has delighted to honour—an inference which, perhaps, would not be altogether war-

ranted ; but none the less does it signify that the wearer has been honoured with the highest mark of preference at his sovereign's disposal, the Order of the Garter. Altogether a striking presentment, yet unlovely withal, whereof the component parts are splendour lacking harmony, symmetry lacking charm, elegance lacking ease, suavity without the impression of sincerity, dignity without that absence of constraint which true dignity implies—in fact, a fine picture spoiled by artificial and meretricious handling of the artist, who happens to be also, in this instance, the sitter. The subject is far, very far indeed, from being a bad one, but it has been abominably treated, and that ever-intrusive taint of self-consciousness mars the general effect. Nevertheless has it points which entitle it to be hung on the line in any representative gallery of British nobles and statesmen who have deserved well of their country.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, even as portrayed by himself, is not to be passed over by any committee of selection. He was too distinguished, both as an artist and a man, for that. His personality is strong, if unattractive ; his gifts great, if not always used to the best advantage. His services to England more considerable than England now remembers ; and his handling more firm and dexterous than that of many a better-known craftsman.

Considering his qualifications and antecedents, there are few more fortunate, or (using the word in a special and restricted sense) *unfortunate* persons in His Majesty's dominions than this self-conscious nobleman who stands there regarding the players around him with a tolerant, though supercilious smile. Born to the highest rank, inheriting the prestige and wealth of a distinguished line, endowed with uncommon ability, learning, eloquence, taste, and energy, such a man was bound to go far ; and he *did* go far, though not in the way he wanted to ; bound to succeed,

and he *did* succeed, though contrary to his own aspirations. From the moment of his entrance into the arena of public life his career is a history of defeats, chequered by victories gained, as it were, in his own despite. With him the unexpected always happened; the unsought-for always arrived. At the outset he consistently attached himself to that political side which was bound to lose. While George I was king, he chose to link his fortunes with those of the then heir to the throne, who, according to the amiable wont of our early Hanoverian sovereigns, happened to be at daggers-drawn with his august father. Yet he obliterated the claims arising from this sacrifice by exasperating, and deservedly so, the Princess of Wales, whose all-powerful influence over her weaker-minded husband is matter of history. As a consequence, he lost that husband's favour, who on succeeding to the crown took little pains to conceal his dislike. Following up the same tactics when George II ascended the throne, he attached himself to the next Prince of Wales, also at variance with his royal sire, and one of the most unreliable personages that ever lived. By him he was, of course, thrown over; nor could he in any case have profited much by the favour of a prince who was always in disgrace while he lived, and who died before he could benefit anybody. Next he managed to do a very difficult thing, namely, to make an enemy of the most good-natured and powerful statesman in England, Sir Robert Walpole, upon whose favour depended, more than in the case perhaps of any English Prime Minister who ever lived, such preferment as the Crown had to bestow. The result was inevitable. Although his high station and eminent abilities precluded his being absolutely passed over when offices were distributed, such as fell to his lot were never those which he sought for, and rarely those which he liked. The political friends he made were always those whose friendship was the most useless. In other walks of life the same fortune attended him. In the *haut*

*monde* he was detested by the ruling powers—the Queen and her satellites, the Herveys, the Walpoles—and was fain to console himself with the friendship of one who was held to be the King's discarded mistress,<sup>1</sup> and of others under a cloud. In the world of letters he incurred the animosity of Johnson, perhaps the only man whose good word was then really worth having; though a boon companion of Swift, Pope, Gray, and Arbuthnot, whose flattery served him less than the other's honest criticism. He sold himself in a derogatory marriage at the shrine of wealth, and never got the full price. He had no child by that marriage to succeed him, though a vagrant amour furnished him with one that wrecked his fondest hopes. On the other hand, the Viceroyalty of Ireland, which he accepted with reluctance, and which was probably conferred upon him as a rebuff, constitutes his highest claim to the respect and admiration of his countrymen. The diatribe of Johnson, which would have crushed most men, has actually served to keep his memory green. Those letters, written *currente calamo* and published without revision, which he would have given almost anything to suppress, have won him a well-defined place in literature, while his *dilettanti* and carefully-selected works have almost sunk into oblivion. The wealth which he expected to derive from his ill-assorted marriage eluded his grasp; but a penurious and malevolent old woman, to whom he was related neither by affection, kindred, or any other tie,<sup>2</sup> left him a fortune by her will. It is one of the oddest stories on record, of frustrated effort and undesigned success, which meets us at every passage of his life.

Upon the whole, then, his career, splendid as it was, must be pronounced a failure, inasmuch as, having every advantage of position to start with—natural abilities far above

<sup>1</sup> Lady Suffolk was usually supposed to fill this position, though on questionable grounds; see Chesterfield's "Character" of her in his *Miscellaneous Works*. Horace Walpole held the same opinion.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.

the standard which experience shows us is requisite to achieve the highest aims in public life, acquirements unsurpassed by any of his compeers, profound knowledge of men, the gift of leadership, eloquence, energy, perseverance, plausibility, in fact all the qualifications supposed to command success—he fell lamentably short of the success he aimed at. The popular theory of “sheer bad luck,” by which such failures are usually accounted for, scarcely applies; as it is evident from what has been said regarding his fortuitous successes that Chesterfield was far from being one of those unlucky personages who seem predoomed to failure. We are therefore forced to look for a reason in the man himself, or in his methods; for some flaw in his moral structure, or in his conduct, which may account for the unsatisfactory result. We ask ourselves, Was he a man who did not deserve to succeed? No man seems ever to have been more the sport of fate; no man was ever treated more capriciously by that mistress for whose smiles he sacrificed so much. It were indeed absurd to describe him as “a good man”; but judged by the standard of his time, he was no worse than many of his compeers who got on very well indeed, and a great deal more honest and conscientious than most of them. “Good,” in the sense that Earl Cowper was good, he certainly was not. If public worth be inseparable from a strict observance of the Decalogue, *cadit quæstio*, his lordship is out of the running completely; but if his title to respect depend in any way upon the conscientious performance of his more obvious duties in those states of life to which he was called; upon hard, honest work; upon unblemished integrity and impeccability in the discharge of his various offices; upon just and honourable dealing with those of whose interests he was appointed the guardian; in defending the weak from oppression; in discountenancing, both by precept and practice, jobbery, shams, extortion, and intolerance—his claim is not to be so summarily dismissed. Was he, then,

deficient in the qualities of a great man? And to this an even less definite answer must be given. That he might have achieved greatness, few who have carefully studied his life and memoirs will be inclined to dispute; beyond this there is hardly room to go. With all his powers, and they were certainly not inferior to those of any English statesman of his time,<sup>1</sup> he rarely contrived to make the most of his opportunities, nor had he the knack of creating opportunities for himself. What he once said of a contemporary—that he had “all the senses except common sense”—might, so far as the conduct of his own personal interests is concerned, with almost equal justice be applied to himself. The bad fortune which pursued him was too frequently the result of his own action to leave much doubt on this point. Men who go sensibly to work usually attain their ends, especially when they happen to possess the energy, acumen and native advantages which formed his equipment for the battle of life; and his lordship’s failure is therefore presumptive evidence against the soundness of his tactics. That the name of a statesman who, during a long life, was admittedly the ablest debater in the House of Lords at a time when that House had incomparably more weight in legislation than it now carries, should be associated with only one or two measures of any real importance, is a circumstance not a little remarkable; and in the face of it, the epithet “great” is scarcely applicable to the statesman in question. Yet it is impossible to deny that he had the elements of greatness in him, or that he was the greatest of a lordly and brilliant race.

Lastly comes the question that will, perhaps, have more interest for the general reader than any of the above—was he a “nice” man? We use this conventional and undignified adjective because there is no other word in the language that expresses the same idea; it may be

<sup>1</sup> Smollett pronounces Chesterfield “the only man of genius employed under Walpole, and one of the most shining characters of the age.”

namby-pamby, but it is understood by all.<sup>1</sup> Frankly, we do not think he was; and that there is some ground for this impression seems plain from the statement current during his life, that he was “a man who had no friends”—a statement which we know to be untrue, but whose currency is enough to show the impression which his lordship created. With all his benevolence, and it was unquestioned; his *agréments*, and no man ever had more; his power of making himself amusing in all companies—and this was generally admitted even by his enemies; the want of heartiness and spontaneity which may have been the direct consequence of his exquisite manners<sup>2</sup> produced an impression of insincerity that was fatal to his popularity. Those with whom he conversed usually cherished a lurking suspicion that, despite his courtliness and bonhomie, he was laughing at them in his sleeve. Besides, he had one fatal weakness which is the cause of more enmities than the display of mere brutal ill-will—he could not resist the temptation of saying “a good thing” when it occurred to him, no matter at whose expense. To him, says Hervey, was Boileau’s line—

Qui pour un bon mot va perdre vingt amis—

quoted by himself—particularly applicable. Not even

<sup>1</sup> The epithet “nice” is so distinctly feminine in its use and application, that a satisfactory definition of it can only be given by a female hand; but it is not easy to find one among the women writers of Chesterfield’s time that defines it in any but a negative, or illustrative, way. Perhaps one of the most satisfying explanations, though only so by inference, is that of Mrs. Thrale, who accounts for a liking as follows:—“’Tis not for their wisdom that one loves the wisest, or for their wit that one loves the wittiest: ’tis for benevolence, and virtue, and honest freedom, one loves people: the other qualities make us proud of loving them.” (*Diary of Madame D’Arbly*, vol. I, p. 322). And reading this by the light of Fanny Burney’s comment on Horace Walpole: “Gay, though caustic; polite, though sneering; and entertainingly epigrammatical. I like and admire; but I could not love, nor trust him” (*ibid.*, p. 533), we may possibly gain a fair notion of what constitutes *nice-ness*—and its reverse.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Johnson admitted that his manners were “exquisite”; and Hervey reluctantly testifies to the same effect.

royalty itself enjoyed immunity from that wicked tongue of his ; and the enmity of Queen Caroline, which may be said to have wrecked his public fortunes, was, and that not only on her own showing, provoked by his impertinence. It is passing strange that one who courted "the graces" so assiduously should have overlooked the most important of them all—self-repression. Nor is it perhaps too much to say that this oversight, more than anything else, proved his stumbling-block in the path to greatness. For although we may adopt the epithet which his descendant, Lord Carnarvon, applies to the subject of this narrative, it is only in the relative sense, "greatest of the Chesterfields," that modern history permits it to be joined with his name.

But all this time we have left the noble earl standing with his young friend in a corner of one of the rooms devoted to play at the Bath Temple of Fashion ; and as his lordship is talking very earnestly, whilst his companion listens with well-bred imperturbability, the reader may like to know the subject of conversation. We take a moment at which the elder becomes particularly confidential, for he sinks his voice to a whisper as he bends slightly towards his companion's ear ; and this is what he says, glancing at the same time towards some people who are standing near them :—

"Beware of these scoundrels ; it is by flight alone that you can preserve your purse."<sup>1</sup>

The neophyte thanks him. He is no fool, and prefers to risk his money where the chances are more equal ; so, with the old-world ceremony that is now as dead as Queen Anne, he bids his kind mentor adieu and hurries to the ballroom. As he goes, we can fancy him thinking, "Not half a bad sort, that Chesterfield ! Trust *him* to give those rooks a wide berth. Decent of him to try to keep others clear of

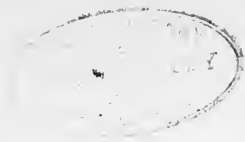
<sup>1</sup> This incident is related briefly in footnote 59 to vol. I, p. 85, of Dr. Maty's edition of *Lord Chesterfield's Life and Works*.



their beaks if he can ! Pity he's such a prig ! " with other comfortable reflections of a similar kind. Well, after an hour or so, our young friend tires of the ball, and thinks he will take one more look at the play before returning to his lodgings in Milsom Street. He re-enters the card-room, congratulating himself perhaps that his noble friend will not be there this time to hamper the freedom of his actions ; and, to his unutterable astonishment, beholds his late mentor engaged at play with those very harpies whom, by that mentor's advice, he had just escaped. We may be pretty sure that when our young Telemachus visits White's on his return to town, he relates this story, with appropriate comments, to the *habitués* of that establishment, by whom it is received and afterwards disseminated, as reports to the disadvantage of anybody—especially of one who is by no means popular—are heard and repeated. The anecdote, which is only one of scores in active circulation to the prejudice of its subject, helps to strengthen the prevalent impression that the noble earl is insincere, or as the downright country-gentlemen put it, " a humbug." It is by such petty incidents that an unpopular man is judged and his reputation settled among his fellows ; and the many who had felt the lash of Chesterfield's unsparing wit were not likely to be slow in using the weapon with which this episode had supplied them. He reaped as he had sown, and his disregard for the feelings of weaker brethren recoiled upon himself. Why should they spare him who had never spared them ? Every bitter witticism, every scornful gesture, every involuntary slight that he had flung upon the social waters, came home to him after many days in the form of a reputation which all his worthier actions have not availed to salve. In common life, as at common law, it is by our peers that we are judged, and to practise a demeanour offensive to the jury is surely not the likeliest way to obtain a favourable verdict.

So, all through his career, Lord Chesterfield may be said

to have been his own worst enemy. The tact upon which he prided himself failed him just at the most momentous crises of his life. The persons whom it was his interest to conciliate were the very persons whom he managed to offend; the words fraught with wisdom which he had always at his disposal for other people's affairs were messengers of folly in dealing with his own; the thought and circumspection and discrimination which he evinced in public life became want of penetration, short-sightedness, and fatuous obstinacy in the management of his private relations. The consequence is that, with all his gifts, powers, advantages, and high qualities, he must be written down a failure; not an absolute one, but a failure to this extent—that he ranks in history much lower than his deserts as compared with those of the other public men of his time.



## I

# THE RISE OF THE STANHOPE

**I**F, in his letters to his godson, Lord Chesterfield deprecated pride of birth as the most contemptible form of self-conceit,<sup>1</sup> no man had a better right to do so without the imputation of being envious. The family of Stanhope is one of those whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity. We know comparatively little of its history until it became associated with that of the county of Nottingham; but long before then the Stanhopes had flourished in that of Durham, and are said by Camden, in his *Discourse on Surnames*, to have taken their name from "the town of Stanhope (now a forest so called) in Darlington wapentake, in the bishopric of Durham, of which they might be owners," a statement which is borne out by other competent authorities. At all events, it may be taken for granted that, even before the time of Edward I, they had been established in the north of England for many centuries. The name of Sir Philip Stanhope figures in the annals of Henry III and Edward I; and the stock is perpetuated in at least three illustrious branches—Chesterfield, Stanhope, and Harrington. In course of time they migrated from Durham into Nottinghamshire, and from the reign of Edward III their estates have lain for the most part in that county and in Derbyshire. Shelford, in the former county, is noted by Camden as "the seat of the famous family of Stanhope, Knights, whose state and grandeur in these parts is eminent, and

<sup>1</sup> 16 July, 1768, p. 258 in Lord Carnarvon's edition.

their name renowned." Connected with the way in which this place came into their possession there is a curious bit of history. In the reign of Henry VIII there lived one Michael Stanhope, who for a time stood so high in the favour of that capricious monarch that, upon the suppression of the monasteries, the Crown awarded him a grant of the manor of Shelford, which had belonged to the dissolved monastery there. During the lifetime of Henry he continued to enjoy it in peace, but upon the fall of the Protector Somerset, in the following reign, became involved in the ruin of that nobleman, whose brother-in-law he happened to be; and perished on the scaffold in company with Sir Thomas Arundel, Sir Miles Partridge, and Sir Ralph Vane—all of them men who little deserved their fate. To him succeeded his son, Sir Thomas Stanhope, who lived to a great age, dying in 1594, and bore a high reputation as a knight of prowess—being in fact one of the four Nottinghamshire knights whom Queen Elizabeth is said to have celebrated in the couplet given further on.<sup>1</sup> From the truncheon which he wields in his picture at Bretby, it is assumed that he had attained the rank of a general; but at any rate he seems to have been a worthy man in all respects, who owed no little of his virtues to the early training bestowed upon him by his mother, a notably excellent woman. In his time (1592) blazed out the feud which was long maintained between the families of Cavendish and Stanhope. In some way the old knight and his son managed to arouse the always ready temper of that irascible lady the Countess of Shrewsbury, daughter of the famous "Bess of Hardwick," though the quarrel did not then assume any more violent shape than fierce denunciations from the voluble Countess and mild rejoinders from the gentlemen who had given her offence. But in 1596 there unfortunately occurred a "defacement" of the Shrewsbury arms at Newark by some person or persons

<sup>1</sup> *v. p. 17, post.*

unknown, for which she chose to hold the Stanhopes responsible. This was so serious a matter that it was deemed nothing but blood could efface the insult. Accordingly Sir Charles Cavendish, brother of the Countess, despatched a challenge to young Mr. John Stanhope, who does not appear to have been of the same metal as his father; for he evaded giving satisfaction by various devices unacceptable to the spirit of the time, and in fact displayed the white feather rather conspicuously. What was still more fatal to his reputation, he was accused of resorting to foul play by setting hired bravoës on his adversary; though in this respect there does not seem to have been much to choose between the belligerents, for we have a contemporary account of an attack upon Mr. John Stanhope in Fleet Street by "the Earl of Shrewsbury's fellows." There was a repetition of the same sort of thing in 1599, when Sir Charles Cavendish was attacked near his home at Kirkby, in Nottinghamshire, and severely wounded by a party of desperadoes suspected of being in the pay of his adversary, whom he gallantly routed; but after the excitement produced by this outrage had cooled down, matters seem to have taken a more peaceful complexion, and Mr. (now Sir John) Stanhope's name is allowed to rest in possibly deserved oblivion, though there was no good understanding between the respective families.<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough, before

<sup>1</sup> For a simple question of the kind it is somewhat difficult to arrive at an exact knowledge of the facts connected with this quarrel. The Countess of Shrewsbury, as above mentioned, was daughter of the famous "Bess of Hardwick," i.e. Elizabeth Hardwick, born in 1512, who was the daughter of Mr. John Hardwick, of Hardwick, in Derbyshire. Whilst still a child she was married to another child of great wealth, but incurably diseased, who, dying before the marriage was consummated, left her all his property. Having remained a widow for fourteen years, she married a Sir William Cavendish, of Cavendish, in Suffolk, who, though about twenty years her senior, proved a most uxorious husband. Upon his death she married Sir William Saint Loe, of Gloucestershire, Captain of the Guard to the Queen, who loved her well, but left her a widow; whereupon she took, as her fourth husband, Talbot, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury, the most infatuated of them all. With her permission Sir William Cavendish, her second venture, sold his ancestral estates in

another century had passed away, this feud of the Stanhopes and Cavendishes was ended by a marriage, which transferred a principal part of the Cavendish domains to a branch of the Stanhopes. Anne, daughter of old Sir Thomas Stanhope, became the wife of John Hollis, first Earl of Clare; and the fourth earl of that line, being their great-grandson, who married the daughter and coheir of Henry Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, was raised to that dukedom by a new creation in 1694.<sup>1</sup> In this connection it may be stated that the first Earl Stanhope was grandson of the first Earl of Chesterfield, and was created Viscount Stanhope of Mahon in 1717, and Earl Stanhope in the year following; also that a son of the Sir John Stanhope before mentioned, by his second wife, was the great-great-grandfather of William Stanhope, who was created Baron Harrington in 1729, and Viscount Petersham and Earl of Harrington in 1742. To put the matter shortly, of this same Sir John Stanhope, the meekest of his race, the eldest son became first Earl of Chesterfield, the grandson first Earl Stanhope, and the great-great-grandson first Earl of Harrington.

Their reputation for loyalty was ever undimmed throughout those troubled times. In the words of one who makes no secret of his admiration for their most illustrious descendant, "Their zeal for their country and fidelity to the Crown, ever since the reign of Edward III, though often tried, could never be shaken; and their eminent services in the most critical times were justly rewarded by places of trust and marks of distinction."<sup>2</sup> They were mostly men of action, distinguished rather in the field than in the senate—a sturdy, uncompromising, dependable race; and it is in this sense, not in that understood by Lord Car-

Suffolk, and with the proceeds thereof added to the Barlow domains in Derbyshire Chatsworth, which he purchased from its former possessors, the Leech family.

<sup>1</sup> See this subject fully treated in Craik's *Romance of the Peerage*, vol. III.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 16.

narvon,<sup>1</sup> that we believe Queen Elizabeth describes the Stanhope of her day in the distich which she is said to have composed on some of the leading Nottinghamshire worthies :—

Gervase the gentle, Stanhope the stout,  
Markham the lion, and Sutton the lout.

In the reign of her successor the claims of their loyalty, as well as some further claims of a less exalted nature, were liquidated by the Crown in the manner which was ever most convenient to the Stuart dynasty. Philip Stanhope, eldest son of Sir John of that ilk, received the honour of knighthood, and afterwards, by letters patent bearing date 7 November, 1616, was advanced to the dignity of a baron of the realm, by the title of Lord Stanhope of Shelford, which he enjoyed for twelve years, until on 4 August, 1628, he was created by Charles I Earl of Chesterfield. The newly-made earl seems to have carried his honours very meekly, for he continued living in rural retirement until summoned to the Parliament that met in 1640, which, as all know, was that "Long Parliament" so fatal to his royal master. When the Civil War broke out the Earl acted in accordance with the family traditions and his own leanings. Although he had strongly disapproved of the action of the Crown in its encroachments upon popular liberties, and had employed whatever influence he possessed in trying to heal the dissension between monarch and subjects, this was not the time for a Stanhope to hesitate, and, together with his sons, he took up arms in support of his sovereign, "with the vain hope of restoring subordination and allegiance." The family seat at Shelford was put into a posture of defence and, being duly garrisoned, was placed under the command of his son Philip; whilst the Earl himself, with his other sons and a loyal retinue of three hundred gentlemen and followers, seized Lichfield for the King. Both efforts

<sup>1</sup> Prefatory Memoir to the *Letters*, p. lxxii.

were attended by disaster. Poor Colonel Philip Stanhope had his stronghold stormed by that distinguished Parliamentarian, Colonel Hutchinson, and after a most gallant resistance, in which he and most of his men lost their lives, Shelford was taken; whilst Bretby (or Bradby), another fortified seat of the family, which lay about three miles from Burton-on-Trent, shared the same fate, though after a less heroic defence, at the hands of Roundhead detachments. As for Lichfield, the Earl had not time to place that city in anything like fighting trim before it was invaded; and after what is described as "a severe but unavailing contest" he surrendered to Sir John Gill, and accordingly became prisoner of the latter. As this happened in 1642, when the poor Earl had passed his prime and was not in a condition to undergo a long and rigorous imprisonment, his health broke down before his release; and he died two years after his liberation, on 12 September, 1656, at the age of seventy-two, when Cromwell was Lord Protector, and the cause for which he had sacrificed so much was, to all appearances, hopelessly lost<sup>1</sup>—a sad ending to a life that opened so brightly.

The Earl had been twice married. By his first wife, Catherine, granddaughter of the Earl of Huntingdon, he had a numerous family; by his second wife, Anne, daughter of Sir John Packington, one son, the ancestor of Earl Stanhope. None of the sons by his first marriage lived to succeed him; and his heir-apparent was found in the person of Philip Stanhope, born of the marriage between his second son (Henry) and Catherine, daughter of Lord Wotton. Henry Stanhope having predeceased his father in 1634, when his own son was only a year old, the care of young Philip devolved upon his widowed mother. This lady having been appointed governess to the Princess of

<sup>1</sup> He was buried in St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where a "handsome monument" is said to have been erected to his memory; but of this monument no trace remains.



Orange, daughter of Charles I, carried the boy with her to Holland in 1642, where she soon afterwards married, *en secondes noces*, John Polyander of Kerkhoven, lord of Heenvliet, a Dutch nobleman who had been employed in negotiating the Orange match. By his interest and active help she managed to render considerable assistance to the adherents of Charles II, and to furnish that prince with supplies of arms, ammunition, and money during his greatest distress while battling for his rights among his own subjects. Royalty, for once, did not prove ungrateful. Upon his restoration the King, "in regard that the Lord Stanhope, her husband, did not live long to enjoy his father's honours," also, in consideration of her own services to his royal person and of her long and faithful attendance upon the Princess of Orange, his Majesty's sister, by letters patent bearing date 29 May (12 Charles II) advanced Lady Catherine to the dignity of Countess of Chesterfield, to enjoy the same during her natural life; with the proviso that her daughters should have precedency as earl's daughters. Up to the time of her emigration to Holland young Philip Stanhope had resided with his mother at Lord Wotton's seat in Kent, and he was about seven years of age when they both took that journey. The next two years he spent under the tuition of his stepfather's father, who had been Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden, a most learned and pious man, for whose character his youthful pupil imbibed profound respect. This worthy mentor having succumbed to old age, the young fellow seems to have spent two more years in a rather desultory way; but with considerable enjoyment, and even risk, to himself. He tells us with boyish delight how he saw at Breda the army of the Prince of Orange, amounting to 24,000 men, drawn out before the arsenal, Queen Henrietta Maria, with the Prince, marching at their head; and how in the year ensuing he was saved from drowning by the presence of mind of a

little girl who, seizing him by the shoestring, extricated him from his peril. Being now twelve, he was sent for a year to the Prince's college at Breda; from whence he went to France, "where he spent three months at the court of the Queen-Mother, and the remainder of his year at Blois."<sup>1</sup> Next he returned to Holland and became "a resident for one entire twelvemonth at the Princess Royal's court"; and he informs us that he "had never afterwards any governor or tutor." Being now fifteen, he was regularly placed in the establishment of the Princess Royal and attended that august lady on her visits to Spa and Aix-la-Chapelle; after which the really exciting part of his very stormy life may be said to have commenced. He narrowly escaped shipwreck on the voyage from Delft to Antwerp, in a gale during which fifteen vessels of the fleet foundered. And when the time came for his leaving Holland we read that he was "honoured with letters from the Princess Royal which secured him a gracious reception at several minor courts in Flanders."

Our young Earl was now fairly launched on the tide of fortune with an auspicious start. He had a goodly presence and the *bel air*, was versed in the etiquette of courts, danced well, spoke well, and had "an uncommon knowledge of fence"—no mean accomplishment in those days. With rank and wealth to back these endowments, fortune seemed well within his reach. Having tasted all the pleasures which the Low Countries afforded, he left Brussels for Paris, where he was at once given an opportunity of distinguishing himself. "I went," says he, "with the messenger to Paris, and we (being sixteen in company, all well armed) relieved a coach full of ladies, who were set upon by fifteen soldiers of fortune; after which coming to Paris, I first waited on the Queen-Mother, and then put

<sup>1</sup> The several portions of this narrative, given in his own words, are taken from an edition of his *Letters*, published in 1829, by E. Lloyd, of London.

myself into Monsieur de Veau's<sup>1</sup> academy; where having learned my exercises till the end of that year, I chanced to have a quarrel with Monsieur Murray, since Captain of the French King's guards, who I hurt and disarmed in a duel, and thereupon I left the Academy." This encounter at the age of sixteen formed, as we shall see, the precursor of many other duels; in fact, there were but few gentlemen of those ruffling times who had a larger experience in this way.

In 1649, being then about seventeen years of age, he went to Italy, furnished with recommendatory letters from the Queen-Mother,<sup>2</sup> and arrived at Turin just in time to share in the festivities attending the marriage of the Duke of Savoy's daughter to the Prince of Bavaria. From Turin he went to Rome, where, during a stay of nine months, he mingled in the very highest society of that capital. Next he visited Naples, Venice, and Milan, partaking all manner of delights; but experienced on his return from the latter city a slight foretaste of the troubles that were in store for him. "Riding fast," he tells us, "with only one servant, through Germany, I was robbed, and in very great danger of being kill'd; but, at last, I got safe into Holland, and from thence into England, where I had not been since I was seven years old." He was now given a chance of settling down, for in 1650 he married Lady Anne Percy, daughter of the Earl of Northumberland, by whom he had one son, who died in infancy. With her he lived at Petworth in a retirement that was only varied by sundry supernatural visitations which appear to have disturbed his lordship's mind a good deal, and of which one, as he asserts, foretold his wife's death, which took place in 1652, followed by that of his son, leaving him a prey to such affliction that he resolved to quit England, "taking only with me a little foot-boy."

<sup>1</sup> A celebrated fencing-master.

<sup>2</sup> Henrietta Maria.

From the commencement of this journey the really exciting part of his lordship's chequered career may be said to date. "I stay'd," he informs us, "for six weeks in France at Marsels [*sic*] for a passage, to have gone with pilgrims to Jerusalem; but finding none, I went to Civita Vecchia, and so to Roum. As we went our Gallie had a fight against two Majorkins, who boarded her twice, and kil'd fortie of her men. I stay'd at Roum almost a year, where swimming one day in the Tiber (a rapid, muddie river) with the Earl of Lindsey, the cramp ceasing [*sic*] mee, I sank down to the bottom, and not being able to rise again upon the water, and finding the bank under the water to slope, I crept on all fours till I came out at the side, to the amazement of the Lord Lindsey and many more who were standers by. At this time there happened a very great plague there, five persons dying out of the house where I lodged; in which sad time I received news by letter from England that, a decree in Chancerie being given against me, my unkle Arthur had seised all my estate; and therefore that I ought not any more to expect returns of mony; and that if I came into England I should infallibly be imprisoned for a debt of ten-thousand pounds, which my unkle (who at that time was well with the Protector Cromwell) pretended that I owed him. In this unfortunate condition, having in the world but five and twenty pound, I left Italy, and went by sea to Marsels in France; from whence, after having made a quarantine in the pest-house, I went to Lions; and from thence, sending my servant (for want of mony) afoot to Paris, I went with the messenger; but falling desperately sick by the way of a violent feavour, and having spent all the mony I had, I was left alone in a cottage and reduced to begg. But the merciful God did not long leave me in that condition; for, a Jesuit coming along that road, who I had formerly been acquainted with in Italy, relieved me, and paid for my journey with him to Paris."

The news of his grandfather's death awaited the much-enduring wanderer at Paris; and he accordingly lost no time in starting for England, where, having managed to settle the pecuniary difficulty with his remorseless "unkle," he took possession of his ancestral estate and began to cut a figure in the world. Cromwell at first viewed the young nobleman with so favourable an eye that he offered him his daughter in marriage, with a portion of twenty thousand pounds, besides giving him the choice of a high command either in the army or navy, as he might prefer. Both projects fell through; the former although the parties were "thrice asked at St. Martin Church in London," in 1656, and the latter owing to his lordship declining the preferment offered him. The Protector's feelings toward him were, not unnaturally, altered by these events; and when a year afterwards (1657) the young Earl wounded and disarmed one Captain Whaley in a duel caused by the former's most unjustifiable conduct to a lady, Cromwell promptly sent him to the Tower. That his lordship was about this time anything but a model young nobleman is pretty evident from the remonstrance addressed to him by Lady Essex, his sister-in-law (see her letter given at p. 97 of his own *Letters*). In addition to his own private misdeeds, he was held accountable by the Protector's Government for others of a more venial nature. In 1658 he underwent three distinct imprisonments in respect of charges growing out of his loyalty to the exiled Royal Family—a loyalty which, in spite of many discouragements, marked his whole career. His estates were also sequestered for alleged treason, though "at last," in his own words, "with great charge and trouble I got off." Adversity, however, failed to sober him, for scarcely had he "got off," as described, when he had the misfortune to kill one Mr. Woolly in a duel; and not caring to face the Protector again, was obliged to fly the country. The young reprobate thereupon betook himself to Holland and obtained

from Charles II, who was then at Breda, a formal pardon for his act, which did not seem at the time to be particularly valuable. Armed with this precious document, he revisited Paris, where, becoming attached to the Court of the Queen-Mother and the Duchess of Orleans, he enjoyed himself immensely until impaired health obliged him to have recourse to the healing waters of Bourbon. Having completed his "cure" at that place, he returned to Calais, whence he sailed to overtake King Charles on the latter's voyage from Holland; and being received at sea on board the royal yacht, accompanied the monarch to England, where he shared in the festivities of the Restoration. "I had the honour," says he, "to wait as server with the Earl of Dorset at the King's coronation dinner in Westminster Hall; and was afterwards sent by His Majesty to compliment and bring in the Prince of Swoisons, ambassadour extraordinary from France." Not long after, he had the melancholy privilege of attending the last moments of his early patroness, the Princess Royal, "by whose bed," as he tells us, "I standing when she changed this life, could not but admire her unconcernedness, constancy of mind, and resolution, which well became the grandchild of Henry the Fourth of France."

The same year, that of the Restoration, saw his ill-assorted marriage with the Lady Elizabeth Butler, eldest daughter of the Duke of Ormond. It was a marriage of convenience, and turned out as these sordid unions occasionally do. At the very time when it was concluded his lordship's affections were monopolized by Mrs. Barbara Palmer, afterwards Countess of Castlemaine. As Count Hamilton informs us, he married the former unhappy lady without loving her, and "lived with her for some time on terms of coldness which left her no cause to doubt that she was indifferent to him." Haughty and sensitive, the poor young wife was at first unhappy, then resentful; nor, considering the manners of the time, is it much to be wondered



*Sir Peter Lely Paint.*

*Edward Scireen Sculpt.*

PHILIP, SECOND EARL OF CHESTERFIELD





at if the report is true that she avenged her wrongs in the fashion prevalent at that immoral court. When too late her neglectful spouse tried to win back the affection he had spurned. Hamilton assures us, "*Elle eut le plaisir de lui faire voir qu'elle ne l'aimoit plus.*"

Then began a series of complications which, but for their wickedness, would be intensely amusing. The impulse which drove Lady Chesterfield into immorality being revenge, not truant affection, she seems to have aimed at notoriety by compromising herself with a personage who had no attraction for women beyond that of his exalted station. Passing over a preliminary flirtation with Count Hamilton, for which we have only that self-conceited chronicler's own authority, she seems to have set herself the easy task of fascinating the Duke of York, making, as we are assured, "the most extravagant advances" to him; so that "the whole court were informed of the intrigue before it were well begun." Of these manœuvres her now repentant spouse was necessarily the constant witness; and became distracted with a jealousy which his position at Court made it imperative for him to conceal. To persons so situated confirmation of their suspicions is seldom wanting, and Lord Chesterfield soon fancied that he had discovered enough to justify him in removing his wife from Court. All her protests against the scandal and cruelty of such a proceeding were unavailing. Although it was the depth of winter, her inflexible spouse ordered her back to the country, and saw her depart with an indifference which he did not even endeavour to conceal from her. The Count's comment upon the affair is delightfully characteristic:—

"Very few approved of Lord Chesterfield's conduct. In England they looked with astonishment upon a man who could be so uncivil as to be jealous of his wife; and in the city of London it was a prodigy, till that time unknown, to see a husband have recourse to violent means to prevent

what jealousy fears and what it always deserves. They endeavoured, however, to justify poor Lord Chesterfield, as far as they could safely do it without incurring the public odium, by laying all the blame on his bad education."

It will not have escaped the reader that a species of "triangular duel" had been in progress. Lord Chesterfield had attacked his most august Majesty through Lady Castlemaine, whereupon the Duke of York had avenged his brother by laying siege to Lady Chesterfield, whilst, if the Grammont memoirs are to be trusted, the King engaged to revenge his royal brother through the instrumentality of that willing champion, Count Hamilton, at the same time warning the latter thus:—"I know Lord Chesterfield is of such a disposition, that he will not suffer so patiently as the good Shrewsbury, *qu'on se batte pour sa femme*." His lordship's courage, and well-known skill with the sword made him in fact a very dangerous adversary for gallants who took part in the *ludi cuculorum* then so much in vogue. A sketch of the Earl, drawn by the Count's hand, may be here appended, as it is not likely to err on the side of undue flattery:—

"He had a very agreeable face, a fine head of hair, an indifferent shape and a worn air; he was not, however, deficient in wit; a long residence in Italy had made him ceremonious in his converse with men, and jealous in his connexion with women. He had been much hated by the King because he had been much beloved by Lady Castlemaine."

The Earl's new-born affection for his wife impelled him to join her in the country when opportunity offered, and henceforth they seem to have lived upon terms which, if not romantically happy, were at least not exceptionally the reverse. A son was born to them who lived only three weeks; and in the same year (1660) the King appointed Lord Chesterfield Chamberlain to his future Queen, Catherine of Portugal, then on her way to England.

By the irony of fate he, "in attendance on the Duke of York," received Her Majesty in landing at Portsmouth: when "shee sent mee post with letters to the King, who was then in London, where I found my wife newly brought to bed of a daughter." In 1662, the Earl and his countess passed three months in Ireland on a visit to her father, the Duke of Ormond, who had been appointed lord-lieutenant; and in the following year this visit was repaid at Bretby, where the Earl and Countess had passed the summer. In 1664, Lord Chesterfield was obliged to return to London, partly to resume his duties as Chamberlain to the Queen, and partly to console his mother for the loss of her third husband, Mr. Daniel O'Neale. During this visit he was engaged in the congenial task of investigating, by the royal command, certain supernatural visitations (at the house of a Mr. Mompesson) which furnished the plot for Addison's play of "The Drummer, or the Haunted House." In 1665 he resigned his post of Chamberlain, from the avowed desire of spending his life in the country, and immediately repaired to Wellingborough, "where his lady had for some time sojourned for the benefit of waters in that neighbourhood, of much repute." But two days after his arrival he has to record that, "It being the great plague year, shee fell sick of the spotted fever and died. Whereupon I returned to my own house at Bretby, where I also fell sick of the spotted fever or plague." Such was the melancholy ending of that inauspicious marriage, where the husband began his wedded life as a brute, and ended it as a jailer. Though the unhappy pair lived together on terms that were outwardly well-seeming, there is nothing in their correspondence to show warmth of feeling on either side, or that he succeeded in reviving the affection which his early indifference had destroyed; nor on the wretched lady's decease did he manifest the fervour with which he deplored the loss of his first and third wives. That there were faults on both sides goes without

saying; but when all to the lady's disadvantage has been admitted, it must still be confessed that she was a hardly-used woman. She was only twenty-five when her ruined life came to its untimely close.

Her portrait, as sketched for us by Hamilton in no flattering colours, is sufficiently alluring to make us wonder at the infatuation of her husband's early indifference. "She was one of the most agreeable women in the world; of an exquisite shape, though middling stature, with a complexion very fair, yet having the expressive charm of a brunette. Her eyes were tempting and alluring, large and blue; her manners were engaging, her wit lively and amusing. But," the discarded votary goes on to say, "*her heart, ever open to tender sentiments, was neither scrupulous in point of constancy, nor nice in point of sincerity.*" Have we not in these last words of the discomfited rival a key to the whole situation? Do not they indicate that the woman's life being wrecked by her early disappointment, she had plunged into the vortex of Court immorality with no real gusto; had taken up admirers as they came, and flung them off without a regret. It is the old story of a dead heart which cannot be galvanized back to the warm, beating, constant life that has been crushed out of it by an awful sorrow. The cup of joy, though often tasted, ever palled; and the jaded wife, being incapable of one long, deep, delicious draught, just sipped awhile from the brim, and then laid it down with a kind of loathing.

In 1666 the Earl lost his mother, with whom he had recently been living at Belsise; and in the following year the Crown gave him command of a regiment of foot raised and equipped at his own expense, besides that of a troop of horse and "a battery of twelve cannons." The regiment was allowed to be an uncommonly fine one; but being quartered in marshy and unwholesome plains, most of the men fell sick, and half of them died. Their commander was hardly more fortunate; but emerged from his dangers



*See Peter Lilly Print.*

*T. Wright Sculp.*

ELIZABETH, SECOND COUNTESS OF CHESTERFIELD



with, as usual, a marvellous adventure, thus related by himself: "I also fell sick, and was given over by three of the best physicians in London, who plainly told me that I could not live above two hours; in which time my good friend the Archbishop of Canterbury came and took me in his arms and gave me his blessing and the last farewell, after which I was abandoned by all my servants and left to die. In this condition I lay two hours without anybody coming near me, though I had my senses perfectly well. At last three old women came to lay me out, but finding that I was not yet quite dead I heard them say, 'Wee are come too soon, let us goe, and come again half an hour hence.' But in that time my kinsman, Mr. William Stanhope, comming to me, I desired him to get me some burned claret, which he immediately did, and I found great benefit by it, falling into a great sweat after it, and from that time I began to recover."

For the next few years Lord Chesterfield's life was divided between the amusements of the country and those less innoxious ones which town afforded. Affairs of State did not, however, preclude his taking a full share in those of gallantry. He had at least his full share of *bonnes fortunes* even in those early times; and, as he writes to one of his fair correspondents, possessed "the ill character of being too much an admirer of the sex." Private assignations where the lady who granted them chose to conceal her individuality, which it was considered a point of honour to respect, were then much in vogue; and there is a very piquant correspondence between the Earl and "one who walked four whole nights with me in St. Jeames Park, and yet I never knew who she was." We find that in 1668, three years after his wife's death, he was once more obliged to resort to Bourbon for the sake of an impaired constitution; and that after his return he began to take a more prominent part in public affairs than hitherto. Like his more illustrious descendant, however,

he cast in his lot with the Opposition, thereby making himself so distasteful to the ruling powers that he was fain to discontinue his attendance at Court for several years. In 1669 he took unto himself a third wife in the person of Lady Elizabeth Dormer, daughter and coheir of the Earl of Carnarvon, by whom he had two sons and two daughters. At the time of this third wedding the Earl was only thirty-seven. After his marriage he became more of a country gentleman than ever, devoting much of his time and money to the improvement of his house and garden at Bretby, and refusing an offer of employment at Court. His felicity was, however, short-lived, for Lady Chesterfield's health failed ; and though it was temporarily repaired, he sorrowfully records that "she miscarried of a son, and died seven days after, which was the greatest misfortune to me that I had ever suffered." The bereaved widower now retired altogether into the seclusion of Bretby, where we learn that "he confined himself for six months to his chamber, so gloomy and inconsolable was his sorrow." And from this seclusion he only emerged when, in 1678, he was summoned to Parliament on the impeachment of Lords Arundel and Danby. King Charles now showed that he had not forgotten old services, for shortly after his arrival in London he appointed him, with many kind words, "Lord Chief Justice in Eyre to the south of Trent," a place of much honour though of little profit. Then came the Popish Plot and the execution of the Jesuits—Whitbread, Harcourt, Fenwick, Gower, and Turner—which was destined to cost his lordship dear. One day his servants brought him a letter which they had found. It was directed to his steward, and contained the following notice surmounted by a cross:—



"SIR,—Be secret ; be resolute ; for though our friends have suffered at London, we shall yet have a blow ; for all



noblemen's houses must be made the beacon of the country, and as soon as your lord is gone to London, we will begin with Bretby," etc.

Lord Chesterfield was just then obliged to go to town, leaving his household to the care of his domestics ; but before his departure he took such precautions as were suggested to him by this document. These, however, proved unavailing ; for during his absence the greater part of Bretby was burned to the ground, though without loss of life.

The Bill for the exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession was now engaging the attention of Parliament. It had passed the Commons ; and on its reaching the House of Lords was vehemently opposed therein by Lord Chesterfield. The King, who was present at the debate, sent for his lordship next day, thanked him for his speech, and forthwith made him a Privy Councillor.

Lord Chesterfield now, for a time, devoted his energies to rebuilding his house at Bretby in a sumptuous fashion ; and in 1681 the King added to his other dignities that of the command of the Holland Regiment of Guards, "with greater privileges than ever were granted before." In 1682, on the discovery of the Rye House Plot, he hastened from Bretby to London "to offer my service to His Majesty, who received me with great kindness, and laying his arme on my shoulder, took me aside, and discoursed a great deal concerning the plot and the persons engaged in it." Of the suspected persons the Earl of Essex was brother-in-law to Lord Chesterfield, Lord Russell being also his intimate friend ; and whilst hoping that His Majesty would not think the worse of him on this account, Chesterfield pleaded warmly for the latter, though, as we know, without effect. The very next year was to bring him a fresh proof of the instability of royal favour. On the readmission (in 1683) of the Duke of Monmouth at Court, Lord Chesterfield

offered to resign his justiceship in eyre in favour of His Grace—which offer so incensed the Duke of York that he prevailed on the King to withdraw the title of “Guards” from the Earl’s regiment. In the following year Lord Chesterfield saw his old King die, and “kist the hand of King James the Second,” who seemingly bore him no ill-will; for, in addition to being named one of the Court of Claims at the coronation dinner, he tells us that, “His Majesty was pleased to order mee to wait as server, and gave me the Earl of Litchfield for assistant.” Soon after, however, Monmouth’s rebellion broke out, “which being ended, I asked his majesty’s leave to goe into the country, from whence I sent to be excused from my attendance in Parliament, and writ to the Lord Sunderland, secretaire of state, to acquaint his majesty that my state of health did make mee incapable of serving his majesty any longer as justice in eyre: and, soon after, I received an answer from the Lord Sunderland that his majesty was satisfied with my leaving my place.” Two years more were quietly spent at Bretby; but on the landing of the Prince of Orange in 1688, and the flight of Princess Anne of Denmark from Whitehall, Lord Chesterfield hurried to meet her at Nottingham “with the Lord Ferrers, and several worthy gentlemen, my neighbours, to offer her my services.” These were not received as he expected, the Princess plainly showing that it was her design to utilise the forces placed at her disposal, not against the invader, but against her royal father. Whereupon the Earl bluntly informed her that, while ready to defend her person with his life against any that should dare to attack her, yet as Privy Councillor to the King, her father, he would have nothing to do with the management of troops that he perceived were intended to serve against the latter. This reply gave great umbrage; and although the Earl continued to form one of her retinue, the Princess and her party found his loyalty so inconvenient that upon arriving

at Warwick, where the news of the revolt of the army and of the King's flight beyond the sea reached them, a parting became inevitable. "I told her highness," continues Lord Chesterfield, "that now she was come to a place of safety, I did humbly desire to take my leave, and so, after my having received many thanks from her highness, I returned home with all the gentlemen that went with me."

Resolved to stand by his unworthy master until the last faint hope of a restoration had expired, Lord Chesterfield recognized that the interests of his country were bound up with the new *régime*, and after an interval of two months went up to attend the Convention at London, where he was most graciously received by the Prince of Orange; who "told mee, in the drawing-room before a great deal of company, that he had been brought up till he was ten years old in my mother's house at the Hague (who had been governess to his mother, who was the eldest daughter of King Charles the First), and that I was the man in the world who he remembered the longest, and, therefore, he would always look upon me as one of his family." Not often was William so gracious to an English subject. But the sturdy Royalist was not to be won from his allegiance by soft words. When the questions were put to the Convention—whether King James had abdicated the Crown; whether the throne were not vacant; and whether the Prince of Orange should be elected King of England—Lord Chesterfield gave a decided negative to all three; and further, "often spoke against it, telling them, and proving, that there was no abdication, nor no vacancy in the throne; for the crown being hereditary, the Prince of Orange could not legally be elected King." This outspokenness gave much offence to the greater part of the Convention; but the Prince himself, being more magnanimous than his adherents, appreciated the fidelity in which they were wanting, and sent Lord Mordaunt to tell the Earl

that he forgave what he had said in the Convention. Even this did not silence the obstinate loyalty of our Earl, who continued to vote and speak in the Convention as he had done before. "Then the Prince sent the Earl Fauconberge to expostulate with mee, and then the Earl of Macklesfield to let mee know how good an opinion he had of mee, and how kind he intended to be to mee; but all this not being of force to alter my way of proceeding, I found that his highness was very much offended with mee, and thereupon I left going to Court." William, however, did not lose sight of this trusty servant; and "after his coronation he sent the Earl of Danby to me (though I had refused to be at his coronation) with the offer of making mee gentleman of his bedchamber and one of his privy council; which great honour I declined, with all the thanks and respect imaginable." It seems a pity that two such gallant gentlemen could not have agreed to sink their differences altogether.

"Tidings of the stand which had been made by mee who owed him so little" reached the pitiful refugee in France, who, the Earl tells us, "being satisfied with my proceedings therein, sent privately over a commition, by which he appointed the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, myself, the Earle of Nottingham and the Lord Waimouth, to be regents of the Kingdom. But, when I was consulted about this matter, considering how things then stood, I gave my opinion to have the commition immediately burnt," which sensible advice was duly followed. Fancying that King William viewed him with dislike, the Earl asked permission to withdraw into the country, which the King granted "with many expressions of his favour and kindness to mee." Scarcely had he been three months gone when the King offered to make him Lord Privy Seal; and, within a month after that, to appoint him Plenipotentiary at The Hague. The Earl acknowledged with becoming gratitude this mark of the King's esteem; but pleaded

that he had neither health to undertake the journey to Holland in winter, nor talents that he durst rely on for the discharging so weighty an office to His Majesty's satisfaction and his own honour. So the matter dropped.

Lord Chesterfield now withdrew altogether to the country, where the charms of Bretby grew upon him as time advanced; but in 1694 he revisited London with his family, which had been diminished by the marriage of his daughter, Lady Betty Stanhope, to Lord Glamis, son of the Earl of Strathmore, after the young lady had formed the subject of various other matrimonial projects. His lordship's temper does not seem to have improved with age; for he managed during this visit to quarrel with his old friend, the Marquess of Halifax. "At dinner I told him before company," says the Earl, "that I had rather be a plaine honest country gentleman than a cunning, false, court knave." As the remark was distinctly personal, we are not surprised to learn that "After this, I never more spoke to his lordship, nor he to mee, till his death, which happened the next year." Acerbity of temper was probably not the most painful consequence—to himself, at all events—of the gout with which he was afflicted; but despite his infirmities, the staunch old Earl attended to his duties in the House of Lords, where, in season and out of season, he took occasion to exhibit his loyalty to the Stuart cause. When, for instance, on the discovery of a plot for the assassination of King William, the Commons seized the opportunity to send up a Bill of which the manifest object was to declare the lawfulness of William's title, though it professed to be merely the forming of an association for the protection of his person, he absolutely refused to join the association, although affected by a clause in the Bill which proposed that any member refusing to do so should forfeit any hereditary office held by such member. Naturally enough, the King was not pleased, and showed it by his manner, whereupon the Earl "desired to speak with him

alone in his closet," and then explained at somewhat tiresome length the reasons for his recalcitrancy, to which the wearied monarch simply replied that "the association was not a thing of his contriving," and the matter went no further.

During the next few years Lord Chesterfield suffered much from gout, besides having two fits of apoplexy. King William meanwhile met his death "with great constancy," as the Earl allows, and Anne came to the throne; whereupon Lord Chesterfield refused to take the oath of abjuration, requesting Her Majesty to allow him to retire into the country before her coronation, a request which was readily granted. The year of her accession was a bad one for him. He suffered so greatly from his old enemy, gout, that upon one occasion a surgeon informed him that his foot was mortified, and proposed to amputate it. "To which," says the stout Earl, "I answered that as I was come into the world with two legs I would go out of the world with two legs"; and kept his foot despite the surgeon. The illnesses incident to an old age following a not very well-spent youth now multiplied upon him, and there were other afflictions. He lost a son and a daughter by death, while his eldest son, Lord Stanhope, "fell into a great melancholy," events which seem to have brought that proud spirit into an attitude of devotion, for we find him writing—"I hope that God will sanctify these afflictions to me, and permit mee to make a rite use of them, by humbling myselfe before him, and submitting myselfe patiently (without murmuring) to his will, saying allways 'the Lord be prased, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.'"

In 1705 the French General, Monsieur de Tallard, who had lost the battle of Blenheim and was prisoner of war at Nottingham, was invited by its master to visit Bretby, where the Frenchman confessed that, "setting the King of France's gardens aside, there were not finer gardens in

France." Queen Catherine, widow of Charles II, dying the next year in Portugal, "did mee the honour to make me her first or chiefe executor, which in Portugall is distinguished from the other executors"—a compliment enhanced by the manner in which it was announced to the recipient by the King of Portugal.

The Earl now enlarged his borders by purchasing estates at Brisancoate and Hartshorn, which latter he added to Bretby ; but his maladies growing to an extent that rendered life almost insupportable, he gave Brisancoate to his son, Lord Stanhope, and quitted Bretby for London, taking up his residence in a beautiful villa at Twickenham, where he posed as a patron of the Muses, Dryden paying him the compliment of dedicating to him his translation of Virgil's *Georgics*, and being handsomely requited therefor. He survived his arrival hardly a year, dying in 1712, in his eightieth year, and leaving a character behind him which, allowing for the errors of his early youth and the manners of the period, deserves our admiration. As a staunch friend, a loyal subject, and an honest man, none of his compeers show to more advantage. Though not perhaps a statesman in the highest sense of that word, he was a shrewd and patriotic upholder of what he honestly believed to be constitutional principles ; and his inflexible adherence to the strict doctrine of the succession, if a mistake, was a noble one. In ability he was not wanting, and his correspondence shows that he possessed the elements of literary success had he chosen to utilize them to a greater extent. Brave to a fault, careful of his honour, steadfast in his allegiance despite treatment that might well have excused a departure from it, impervious to bribery in any shape when corruption was the rule, loyal in his friendships, and magnificent in his expenditure, he is chief among the remarkable prominent men of his time as a somewhat rare embodiment of traditional nobility.

His eldest son by his third wife, Philip Stanhope, suc-

ceeded to the title, but did not add much to its dignity. He was educated at Westminster under the celebrated Dr. Busby, and "was thought to have strong parts"; but these were only manifested in indefatigable adherence to the cause for which his family had sacrificed so much. The idea seems to have taken possession of him that the return of the Stuarts was to be an event of the near future. This, however, did not prevent him from marrying the daughter of George Savile, Marquess of Halifax, a strong Hanoverian. But when his eldest son by that marriage, and the subject of this essay, chose to cast in his lot with the reigning family, the paternal displeasure was evinced in an unmistakable way. To his heir, during his life, he only allowed an annual stipend of five hundred pounds; whilst on his second son, whose views coincided with his own, he settled the Buckinghamshire estate, with eight thousand a year. The terms upon which the old Earl and his heir lived are thus hinted at by the latter in one of his letters to his son: "My father was neither desirous nor able to advise me." Nor, indeed, with the exception of his son William, had any of his children<sup>1</sup> much cause to revere his memory. John, the third son, was left wholly unprovided for; but the fourth Earl charged himself with this brother's fortunes, allowing him some £1000 a year, besides getting him a seat in Parliament and the employment of secretary at The Hague. We find an affectionate allusion to him in a *Letter to Dayrolles*.<sup>2</sup> Charles, the fourth son, but for inheriting an estate of three thousand a year from his maternal uncle, Lord Wotton, would have been in a similar plight. True, he made some amends, by his will, in the case of his first-born, to whom he left his whole personal estate, as also his two real estates in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, together with the reversion of the Buckingham estates, which, as we have seen, were settled on his

<sup>1</sup> He had four sons and two daughters.

<sup>2</sup> Of 6 December, 1748 (vol. II, p. 898, Brad. Ed.).



second son, William Stanhope ; but we fear that this must rather be taken as done from a wish that the dignity of the title should be adequately supported than from any considerations of affection. He is the least engaging head of his distinguished family with whom we have had to deal as yet ; undistinguished by either public or private virtues, and evincing only one solitary trait of the manly qualities that characterized the race—namely, their unswerving devotion to a cause which had little but their fidelity to recommend it. He died in 1726 ; and is truly described by Hayward as “a man of morose disposition and violent passions, who often thought that people behaved ill to him when they did not in the least intend it.”

NOTE.—The space devoted in this chapter to the second Earl of Chesterfield may appear disproportionate ; but several considerations had to be borne in mind, when dealing with the life of that nobleman, which necessitated such a treatment ; as he was not only by far the most eminent of the fourth Earl's ancestors, but is frequently confused with the latter, whom in many ways he resembled. The compiler of the present memoir found so much difficulty, owing to this impression, in distinguishing between the two when collating references to either, that he resolved it should not be his fault if the contrast between them were not so fully set forth as to make the recurrence of a similar impression less probable ; and with that object he has emphasized the facts of the second Earl's life in a manner which he hopes will serve to distinguish it from those for which his more illustrious descendant, the fourth Earl, is responsible.

## II

### YOUNG LORD STANHOPE OF SHELFORD<sup>1</sup>

**P**HILIP DORMER STANHOPE, eldest son of the third Earl of Chesterfield by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of the Marquess of Halifax, was born in St. James's Square,<sup>2</sup> London, on the 22nd September, 1694, and the register of St. James's Church, Piccadilly, shows that he was duly baptized on the 9th October following. Little is known about his early childhood, except that he appears to have been strangely neglected by his father; and that the care of him, and

<sup>1</sup> This village, from which the young lord derived his courtesy title, is described in *Lewis's Topographical Dictionary* as *Shelford* (St. Peter and St. Paul), a parish in the southern division of the wapentake of Bingham (county of Nottingham), eight (or six?) miles from Nottingham, and bounded on the west and north by the Trent. In the time of the Civil War the manor house was garrisoned by Colonel Stanhope (son of the first Earl of Chesterfield) for Charles I, but the redoubtable Colonel Hutchinson took it by storm, after a gallant resistance, in which Colonel Stanhope and most of his men were slain. The living is in the patronage of the Earls of Carnarvon, and the church was their burial-place until the death of the sixth Earl, when that distinction was transferred to Bretby, in Derbyshire. In accordance with directions in his will the fourth Earl of Chesterfield was interred in the burying-place nearest to Chesterfield House, which was Grosvenor Chapel, in South Audley Street, but the body was afterwards removed to Shelford, where it remains. Eventually Bretby became the home of the Chesterfields, living and dead, until the decease of the seventh Earl, when Bretby and the other estates went to his sister, the Countess of Carnarvon, and her descendants.

<sup>2</sup> By a strange irony of fate he was born in the house which is now the town house of the Bishops of London, but which was then rented by his father. He afterwards removed to No. 13, where he remained until he went to live in Grosvenor Square upon his marriage.



*J. Hollar del. Sculp.*

GEORGE SAVILE, MARQUIS OF HALIFAX

1740



apparently of his two sisters as well, was undertaken by his maternal grandmother, the Marchioness of Halifax, who by all accounts was a very estimable woman.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately perhaps for himself, he was not subjected to the wholesome ordeal of school life, being privately educated by what, we are assured, were the best masters, who "hit upon the art of adapting their instructions to his disposition; and by this method improved his mind, while they gained his affection."<sup>2</sup> In other words, the young gentleman was allowed to learn pretty much as he pleased; and being naturally a clever boy with a taste for the humanities and a desire to excel, he became a very fair classical scholar, though sadly deficient in mathematics, as he himself more than once confesses. As for modern languages, a decent old Norman woman, who acted as his nurse, taught him from infancy to speak French, though with an accent that grated on Parisian ears, and which not even the more refined instruction of a French Huguenot clergyman (M. Jonneau), who was engaged by the Marchioness later on to improve him in the language, succeeded in eradicating.<sup>3</sup> M. Jonneau also taught him

<sup>1</sup> "Lady Halifax was a woman of understanding, conduct, and sensibility. Dr. Maty somewhat grandiloquently compares her home to that of the mother of the Gracchi, and it was undoubtedly the resort of the leading politicians and the best company, from which much might be learned by so apt a scholar and nice an observer as Lord C." (Hayward). "A woman who with great accomplishments combined overflowing benevolence." (III, Mahon, 483). She was the wife of the famous George Savile, Marquess of Halifax, the statesman and wit who died in 1695, and who, according to Hume, "possessed the finest genius and most extensive capacity of all employed in public affairs during the reign of Charles II, but who was always regarded as an intriguer rather than a patriot." (See for his character *Macaulay's Hist.*, vol. I, pp. 252-5; also Burnet, *Hist. O.T.*, vol. I, pp. 375-6.) Lord Chesterfield resembled him so closely in character, in fact, that he might be described as "the Halifax of his age."

<sup>2</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> When he paid his last visit to Paris (in 1741) M. Fontenelle asked him whether he had not first learned French from a native of Normandy. "His lordship answered that the observation was very just" (Maty). After giving up his charge, M. Jonneau became the pastor of a French chapel in Berwick Street, Soho.

the rudiments of history and philosophy, besides improving his classics, and succeeded in gaining the warm esteem of his pupil, who corresponded with him after going up to Cambridge, and never lost sight of him afterwards. That he also indulged in the sports natural to his age, and excelled in them, is tolerably clear, though we have no knowledge of who his playmates were. For in a letter to his son (then about eleven) he remarks: "When I was your age I should have been ashamed if any boy of that age had learned his book better, or played at any play better than I did; and I should not have rested a moment till I had got before him." Though of an arbitrary and somewhat passionate disposition, he was not above taking advice when it came from a quarter that he respected; and a distinguished officer (Lord Galway, the unfortunate hero of Almanza), who was in the habit of visiting Lady Halifax, once gave him a hint, which the young fellow laid to heart and acted upon during the rest of his life. The keen soldier had noted that his hostess's grandson had "some tincture of laziness," in addition to other failings, whereupon he gave him the friendly counsel, "If you intend to be a man of business you must be an early riser. In the distinguished posts your parts, rank, and fortune will entitle you to fill, you will be liable to have visitors at every hour of the day, and unless you will rise constantly at an early hour, you will never have any leisure to yourself." The result of which admonition was that the hearer became henceforth a confirmed early riser, even when he went to bed late, and after old age had come upon him. Compunction for something which he did or said about this time in a fit of anger also taught him the valuable lesson of restraint, "and for the remainder of his life," we are assured that "he was never known to be discomposed by any emotion of his mind."<sup>1</sup>

He had reached the age of eighteen before his grand-

<sup>1</sup> Maty.



*Sir Peter Lely Pinxt*

*F. Bartolozzi Delit. & Sculpt*

LADY GERTRUDE, MARCHIONESS OF HALIFAX  
1776





mother saw fit to part with him ; and then he was entered at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where the society was generally older and more secular than at the other colleges. Writing to his former tutor, M. Jonneau, 22 August, 1712, he says : " I find the college where I am infinitely the best in the whole university, because it is the smallest and is filled with lawyers who have been in the world and know how to live. We have only one attendant, who is also the only drunkard in the college. Whatever people may say of it, there is certainly very little debauchery in this university, especially among men of standing, for the simple reason that one must have the tastes of a street porter to be able to endure it here." From another letter to the same person, dated 12 October, 1712, we find that his studies were diversified by occasional visits to Newmarket, though he devotes an hour a day to civil law, and another to philosophy, and avows his intention of attending the mathematical lectures of the blind Lucasian professor, Mr. Saunderson. We find also that he has been reading Lucian and Xenophon in the Greek, which, as he naively confesses, is made easy for him by the fact that he does not bother himself with learning grammatical rules, as his private tutor,<sup>1</sup> " who is himself a living grammar, teaches me them all as I go along." According to this gentleman, when Lord Stanhope was at the University he used to study in his apartment without stirring out until six o'clock in the evening ; but he himself says<sup>2</sup> that he reserved a portion of every day for playing tennis, because he wished to have the *corpus sanum* as well as the *mens sana*. That he was, to put it mildly, no ascetic is evident from the unreserved communications which he addressed to his young friend the Hon. George Berkeley,<sup>3</sup> wherein occurs ample proof to the contrary. Some of these

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Dr. Crow, afterwards one of the chaplains of George II.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to M. Jonneau.

<sup>3</sup> Who afterwards married Lady Suffolk, in 1735.

letters indeed are unfit for general circulation, and go to show that his morals were of the scampish order, and that for so young a man he had very little reverence for the fair sex. But they also show him in a more agreeable light, as ready to make up with friends with whom he had quarrelled; and that, as a votary of the Muses, he belonged to the "Witty Club," and wrote verses in commendation of that Peace of Utrecht which he afterwards so bitterly denounced. We have him also confessing, when he first went to the University, "I drank and smoaked, notwithstanding the great aversion I had to wine and tobacco, only because I thought it genteel, and that it made me look like a man."

Outside the University curriculum he made excursions into other studies that took his fancy, attending a course of lectures on anatomy, a science which retained much fascination for him afterwards. And as Dr. Maty sorrowfully remarks, "It might have been better for him if he had not also dabbled in physic; he would not so often have been his own patient, or entrusted his health to the care of empirics."

His vacation was usually spent in town, for whose fashionable entertainments he does not profess much enthusiasm; but neither does he seem, on leaving the University, to have taken away with him any great veneration for his Alma Mater, and it is not a little remarkable that he did not send his son, or his godson and successor, to either Oxford or Cambridge. In writing to the former he alludes to the narrowing effect of such education as those places of learning then afforded. "At nineteen," he says, "I left the university of Cambridge, where I was an absolute pedant. When I talked my best, I talked Horace; when I aimed at being facetious, I quoted Martial; and when I had a mind to be a fine gentleman, I talked Ovid. I was convinced that none but the ancients had common sense; that the classics



HENRY,  
EARL of GALWAY.



contained everything that was either necessary or useful, or ornamental to men." It was, however, at the University that he laid the foundation of that oratorical skill for which he was celebrated ; and the method which he pursued to attain that object is thus described in a letter to his son. "So long ago as when I was at Cambridge, whenever I read pieces of eloquence (and indeed they were my principal study), whether ancient or modern, I used to write down the shining passages, and then translate them as well and as elegantly as ever I could ; if Latin or French, into English ; if English, into French. This, which I practised for some years, not only improved and formed my style, but imprinted on my mind and memory the best thoughts of the best authors." He also, we find from his correspondence with M. Jonneau, was in the habit of attending debates on political subjects, which appear to have been held at a coffee-house in the town, though without taking part in them. His stay at college lasted barely two years, and he quitted it without regret in December, 1714. He was then Lord Stanhope, which became his title on the death of his grandfather ; and this is the picture which he draws of himself at the time. "I had acquired among the pedants of that illiberal seminary [Cambridge University] a sauciness of literature, a turn to satire and contempt, and a strong tendency to argumentation and contradiction. . . . When, with all the awkwardness and rust of Cambridge about me, I was first introduced into good company, I was frightened out of my wits. I was determined to be what I thought civil ; I made fine low bows, and placed myself below everybody ; but when I was spoken to, or attempted to speak myself, *obstitui steteruntque comæ et vox faucibus hæsit*. If I saw people whisper, I was sure it was at me ; and I thought myself the sole object of either the ridicule or the censure of the whole company ; who, God knows, did not trouble their heads about me." And he again alludes to

“an awkward *mauvaise honte* of which I had brought a great deal with me from Cambridge.” This embarrassing diffidence was, however, soon to be dispelled by the remedy usually employed in such cases when the patient happened to belong to the upper classes. It was ordained that, upon leaving college, Lord Stanhope should make the grand tour, though whether from motives of economy, or from reliance upon his own good sense, he was not placed under the charge of a governor, or “bear-leader,” as was the usual practice with gilded youth in those days. In this way he passed through Flanders, visiting Amsterdam, Leyden, Utrecht, and other cities, and spending his time very agreeably, as he writes to M. Jonneau from The Hague.<sup>1</sup> At Antwerp he made the acquaintance of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, who were residing there whilst temporarily under a cloud, by whom he was treated with much cordiality and distinction. “The duke and duchess,” he observes in a letter to his friend George Berkeley, “were so civil to me that I had not time to be so to anybody else, for I was with them from morning to night all the while I stayed there.” It was probably owing to their influence that his sentiments regarding the Treaty of Utrecht underwent so remarkable a change from those he had professed at Cambridge (*Suffolk Corr.*, vol. I, p. 6 *n.*). The friendship of the Duchess at any rate was destined, as we shall see, to be lasting and profitable to him; that of the Duke does not appear to have been valued by him as it deserved. At all events he was not greatly impressed with the mental powers of the hero of Blenheim, though he admired his demeanour. A project of spending the winter in Italy was not carried out owing to the death of Queen Anne; and we next find him at Paris, whence he writes to the same kind monitor, “Except Versailles, I see nothing here that we have not finer and better in England. I shall not give

<sup>1</sup> 10th August, 1715.

you my opinion of the French, because I am very often taken for one; and many a Frenchman has paid me the highest compliment they think they can pay to any one, which is—‘Sir, you are just like one of us.’ I shall only tell you that I am insolent; I talk a great deal: I am very loud and peremptory; I sing and dance as I go along; and lastly, I spend a monstrous deal of money in powder, feathers, white gloves, etc.” From these confidences we may perceive that his lordship’s *mauvaise honte* was rapidly disappearing; and in a letter to his son he shows the extraordinary pains he took to remove it: “I studied attentively and minutely,” says he, “the dress, the air, the manner, the address, and the turn of conversation of all those whom I found to be the people in fashion, and most generally allowed to please. I imitated them as well as I could: if I heard that one man was reckoned remarkably genteel, I carefully watched his dress, motions, and attitudes, and formed my own upon them. When I heard of another whose conversation was agreeable and engaging, I listened and attended to the turn of it. I addressed myself, though *de très mauvaise grace*, to all the most fashionable fine ladies; confessed and laughed with them at my own awkwardness and rawness, representing myself as an object for them to try their skill in forming.” And the ladies were very good to the young fellow, as is their kindly wont. He describes how, after summoning up a little courage, he became one day intrepid enough to go up to a fine woman and tell her that “*I thought it was a warm day.*” To which brilliant observation “She answered me,” says he, “very civilly that she thought so, too; upon which the conversation ceased on my part for some time, till she, good-naturedly resuming it, spoke to me thus:—‘I see your embarrassment, and I am sure that the few words you said to me cost you a good deal; but do not be discouraged for that reason and avoid good company. We see that you desire to please, and that is the main

point; you want only the manner, and you think that you want it still more than you do. You must go through your novitiate before you can profess good-breeding; and if you will be my Novice, I will present you to my acquaintance as such." The mode in which she chose to fulfil her promise was embarrassing, but quite in accordance with the easy manners of French society of the time. Calling up three or four people to her, she said: "Do you know that I have undertaken this young man, and he must be encouraged? As for me, I think I have made a conquest of him; for he just now ventured to tell me, although tremblingly, that it is warm. You will assist me in polishing him. He must necessarily have a passion for somebody; if he does not think me worthy of being the subject, we will seek out some other. However, my Novice, do not lower yourself to opera girls and actresses, who will not require of you sentiment and politeness, but will be your ruin in every respect. I repeat to you, my friend, if you get mixed up with low people you are lost. These wretches will destroy both your future and your health, corrupt your morals, and you will never acquire the tone of good society." The company laughed at this queer homily; and the person to whom it was addressed was, as he himself declares, "stunned by it." But he adds, "When I found afterwards that both she and those to whom she had presented me countenanced and protected me in company, I gradually got more assurance, and began not to be ashamed of endeavouring to be civil. I copied the best masters, at first servilely, afterwards more freely, and at last I joined habit and invention."<sup>1</sup>

We find him now therefore arrived at the stage which he, no doubt with exaggeration, describes to good M. Jonneau as his being "in all respects like a Frenchman"; and we have probably too, the explanation of those purchases of powder, feathers, and white gloves, to which

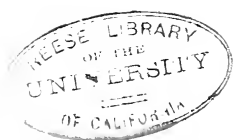
<sup>1</sup> Letter of 11 January, 1750, pp. 308-10, vol. I, Bradshaw's Edition.





*Georgius Aug<sup>us</sup> Dux Brit. Trin<sup>us</sup> et Vice Rex  
 Britanniae Dux<sup>us</sup> et Princeps Elector  
 Hannover<sup>us</sup> abut<sup>us</sup> 20 die Oct<sup>obris</sup> 1714.*

*Painted by John Kneller, 1708, and Map collar at the Bank House in Cornhill.*



he alludes. That his "novitiate" under his fair protectress ever assumed a tender character is very unlikely from the manner of its beginning, nor, so far as we know, did Lord Chesterfield's nature contain the elements of passion in its more refined phases. In that, as in nearly all other respects, he was a product of his time. *Liaisons* no doubt he formed; but a grand passion was no more in his line than in that of the heartless roués who played at love in French and Hanoverian Court circles. Never was immorality more rampant than in the time of Louis le Grand and the first two Georges;<sup>1</sup> and never was the poetic side of the universal passion less in evidence. It was laughed out of court. But French presented great advantages over English society as a training-school for young gentlemen. The immorality which pervaded it quite as thoroughly was rendered less offensive by the presence of a refinement which was conspicuously absent in the latter case. The laxity of manners which accompanied looseness of morals at St. James's was not permitted at Versailles; for, whatever else Louis XIV might be, he was a gentleman, and

<sup>1</sup> The golden age of demirepdom in England may be said to have extended from the accession of Charles II to that of George III. In the time of the former monarch it was a more splendid, in that of George II. a more lucrative calling; indeed, there is reason to think that during the reigns of the first two Hanoverian sovereigns it reached its zenith. We find, for instance, that George I created a lady, who accompanied him from Hanover, Duchess of Munster in the peerage of Ireland and Duchess of Kendal in that of England; also Baroness of Dundalk, Countess of Dungarvan, Princess of Eberstein (Hanover), Countess of Faversham, and Baroness Glastonbury—a splendid record, whose value was enhanced by the moneys that she "touched" for recommending candidates for office under the Crown. Madame Walmoden, who filled a similar capacity to George II, was made Countess of Yarmouth, and used her position to great advantage by obtaining tokens of esteem for preferments made through her instrumentality (for instance, Sir Jacob Bouverie presented her with £12,000 on obtaining his baronetcy). Descending from royalty to the rank of subjects, we find Sir R. Walpole, Prime Minister of England, raising his kept mistress Moll Skerritt to the position of Lady Walpole *en secondes nocces*; and that even the Hierarchy copied prevailing usage is shown by Horace Walpole's letter of 11 December, 1780, in which he describes the domestic arrangements at Archbishop Blackburne's. (See vol. VII, p. 472, of Cunningham's edition of Walpole's *Letters*.)

the whole Court, which took its tone from him, consisted, to all outward seeming at least, of gentlemen and ladies, so far as the artificial decencies of life were concerned. It was otherwise with the first and second Georges, who, but for the circumstances of their birth and position, had no such claim to respect; whose manners were almost as brutal as their morals, and whose Court was less distinguished by good-breeding than is the *bourgeois* society of a tenth-rate provincial town of the present day. It was not alone that morality was set at defiance in the highest quarters, decency itself was ignored. Old Sarah Marlborough, who was never reported to be over-squeamish, avowed that Queen Caroline habitually expressed herself in a fashion that made the ladies present not know how to look; and we have only to consult the pages of Hervey, for example, for proof that the statement is not exaggerated. As for purity, chastity, and other old-fashioned virtues, they were merely subjects of derision at both Courts; but at the latter, even the ordinary formalities of good-breeding were consistently violated by the very personages who were looked up to as the arbiters of etiquette. Kings stormed and swore in the presence of ladies; queens, even the most devoted of wives, were not by any means ideals of courtly grace. The bad tone of both penetrated the circle around them, so that elegance of manners was strangely wanting in the very place where people would naturally look to find it. Even the *bel air*, that species of veneer which gracefully masks, and too often excuses, moral ugliness, was not possessed by many of those who filled the highest stations at Court; dignity was wanting in the men; grace and refinement in the women. Of course there were exceptions, there always are; but it is not too much to say that they were very few, or that the actual state of the highest English society at the time we are dealing with was a reproach to its leaders. Hence the Marchioness of Halifax must be taken to have

acted wisely when, with the view of making her young charge a fine gentleman, she sent and kept him elsewhere. His morals would be in no more danger in Paris than they were in London, and, as schools for manners, there was no comparison between the two places. Nor, upon the whole, did the result fail to justify her policy. If young Lord Stanhope came back to her hard, cynical, and to some extent dissipated, he was at least the finest young gentleman then to be found in the ranks of the English nobility—an advantage which might of itself have carried him far, if he had only known how to use it properly. In effect he was not a Stanhope, for by a physiological variance of which we have frequent examples, it was his mother's, not his father's, family that he took after. As we have already seen, she was the daughter of George Savile, first Marquess of Halifax, the most shining statesman of the Restoration and the most brilliant wit; and to all intents and purposes young Philip may be said to have been the son of his grandfather. One has only to read Burnet's character of the latter to perceive the wonderful resemblance between them. Each was "a man of great and ready wit; full of life, and very pleasant; much turned to satire, whose liveliness of imagination was often too much for his judgment, . . . who preferred a severe jest to all arguments whatsoever; who without being an atheist, could not swallow down everything that divines imposed on the world . . . who, while cherishing a contempt for the world and its prizes, held that 'a man must be a fool for company.'" This was not the way of the earnest Stanhopes, and the divergence of physical tastes was no less apparent. The young lord hated field sports, and the dislike of them seems to have clung to him all his life, for we find him writing to his son in 1748, when he had retired from public life: "All gaming, field-sports, and such sort of amusements, where neither the understandings nor the senses have the least share, I look upon as frivolous, and

as the resources of little minds, who either do not think, or do not love to think" (6 July, 1748). Yet he was fond of riding, and liked dogs. In writing to Dayrelles (9 Feb., 1748) arranging his retirement from public life, he says, "My horse, my books, and my friends will divide my time pretty equally"; and he alludes with almost affectionate playfulness to a dog, "Baron Trenck," which the latter had lent him at his request: "Baron Trenck arrived this morning and seems to be a very civil gentleman."

The date of his return to England is uncertain, but we find him regretting that he was not there to welcome the arrival of George I, which took place in his absence. He was already an ardent Hanoverian, and esteemed the death of Queen Anne as "the happiest thing that had ever befallen England."<sup>1</sup> "For," says he, "had she lived three months longer, she was certainly going to establish her own religion, and of course, tyranny; and would have left us, at her death, a bastard for our king, just as great a fool as herself, and who, like her, would have been led by the nose by a set of rascals." This shows that the young gentleman must have taken a keen interest in the course of events in his own country during his stay on the Continent, and that he managed to keep himself pretty well informed of what was going on there—better even than Lord Bolingbroke, to whom he was the first to reveal how far the plots in favour of the Pretender had progressed before the Queen's death upset them all. The Whigs, it appears, were quite in readiness to take up arms against the expected *coup d'état*. General Stanhope was to have commanded the army, Lord Cadogan to have seized the Tower; all officers on half pay had agreed to give their services, holding their arms in readiness in their bedchambers, and prepared at any moment to hurry to the place of rendezvous, behind Montague House. He most probably did not return to England until the beginning of 1715, as we find him writing

<sup>1</sup> Letter to M. Jonneau.



GENERAL STANHOPE  
*From an old Engraving*





from Paris to M. Jonneau in December, 1714; and almost immediately after his arrival he was presented at Court, and a career was opened up to him through the instrumentality of his relative, General Stanhope,<sup>1</sup> who obtained for him the appointment of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II. About this time also he entered the House of Commons as member for St. Germans, in Cornwall, in the first Parliament held by the new dynasty; and nearly incurred a penalty of £500 by making his maiden speech while still under age.<sup>2</sup> It was not a good speech, as he freely admits. The subject of debate was the proposed impeachment of the principal persons (among whom were included the Duke of Ormond and Lord Bolingbroke) who were responsible for the disgraceful Treaty of Utrecht; and the new member declared that, though "he never wished to spill the blood of any of his countrymen, much less the blood of any nobleman, yet he was persuaded that the safety of his country required that example should be made of those who had betrayed it in so infamous a manner."<sup>3</sup> As this truculent avowal chanced to harmonize with the views of the majority, it was received in a way that mightily encouraged the youthful orator; until, just as he had finished, a member of the Opposition took him aside, and, while disclaiming the wish to do anything unpleasant, quietly explained that if the member for St. Germans ventured to give a vote in the division, it would be his painful duty to acquaint the House that the said member's election was void by reason of his being still under age, and that by sitting and voting therein he had rendered himself liable to a large pecuniary penalty.<sup>4</sup> His lordship was not slow to see the force of this argument.

<sup>1</sup> His father's uncle, made Secretary of State on the accession of George I.

<sup>2</sup> On 5 August, 1715, six weeks before he came of age.

<sup>3</sup> Of which speech he afterwards said: "Had I not been a young member I should certainly have been, as I own I deserved, reprimanded by the House for some strong and indiscreet things that I said."—Mahon.

<sup>4</sup> Under 7 & 8 William III, c. 25.

Making a low bow to his informant, he left the House at once, and betook himself to Paris until the period of his disability had expired.

As a gentleman of the bedchamber his debut was more fortunate. In that position he acquired the valuable friendship of Lord Lumley (afterwards Earl of Scarborough), then Lord of the Bedchamber and Master of the Horse to the Prince of Wales. Though ten years his senior, this nobleman formed a warm attachment for young Lord Stanhope, and it was fully reciprocated. He was perhaps the closest friend the latter ever had. Alluding to Lord Scarborough's death (he committed suicide in 1740), the young lord afterwards wrote: "He was the best man I ever knew, and the dearest friend I ever had" (*Characters*); and in a letter of 15 February, 1740, to Dr. Chevenix, he remarks: "We have both lost a good friend in Scarborough; nobody can replace him to me"; and nothing but death interrupted their friendship. Their intimacy was of the most unreserved nature. As Dr. Maty well remarks: "It continued unalterable amidst the conflict of interests and parties. We need no other test of the respective characters of these two lords than that, though courtiers, they loved, trusted, and esteemed each other." Some evidence of this intimacy is afforded by the picture in which they are represented seated together, and which may be found at p. 51 of Lord Carnarvon's *Introductory Memoir*. Lord Scarborough was indeed a person calculated to excite the admiration and respect of any young man who could appreciate what was deserving. Even the acrid Hervey<sup>1</sup> describes him as "a man of worth, family, quality, sense, figure, character, and honour," whose only defect was that "his inclination had inclined him a little too much to the love of an army," which, to Hervey's Whig prejudices against a standing army, was a natural objection; but which he qualifies by adding that Lord Scarborough "was

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, 95.

bred in a camp, and from thence brought to Court, and had all the gallantry of the one and the politeness of the other; he was amiable and beloved—two things which, though they ought, do not always meet; he was of the Cabinet Council, and was equally fit to be trusted in the most important affairs, or advised with in the most delicate, having knowledge, application, and observation, an excellent judgment, and (without the brilliant éclat of showy parts) a discerning, practical, useful, sound understanding. He was one of the best speakers of his time in the House of Lords; clear in his matter, forcible in his expression, and gave weight not only by his words, but by his character, to any cause he maintained or any opinion he inclined to.” It is not a little to young Stanhope’s credit that, at an age when people are not always discerning in the choice of friends, he should have selected the possessor of these qualities, who was so much his senior, as the object of his warmest regard and affection; and on the other hand, there must have been something both winning and estimable in the younger man to have secured him the steadfast friendship of one who had seen much of life and character. To the regard which is often lightly accorded to good looks and gallant bearing Chesterfield had small claim. “Little Stanhope,” as the courtiers styled him, was no Alcibiades: he had a stunted and ungainly figure and a harsh, squeaky voice.<sup>1</sup> His face, though intellectual, was neither by features nor expression calculated to win beholders; and his manners, though good, lacked the ingenuousness of youth. Still, so practical an observer as Lord Scarborough saw that in the young man which led him to prefer the latter as an associate; and the wisdom of his choice was justified by the event. Nothing ever occurred to mar the friendship so freely given; and he of whom it was said that “he had no

<sup>1</sup> Lady Cowper in her *Diary* alludes to “his shrill scream” (p. 145).

friend," might in this instance at least have given the lie to his detractors.

During his involuntary visit to Paris, after that unlucky maiden speech, the Rebellion of 1715 was finding work for the authorities at home; and, as the feelings of Louis XIV towards the movement were no secret, Lord Stanhope had a good opportunity for watching the course of our diplomatic negotiations with the French Court. The Earl of Stair, who was then British Minister at Paris, received the young man kindly; and as the latter was known to be "sound," probably took him more or less into his confidence. In fact, one of his biographers<sup>1</sup> hazards the opinion that "Lord Stanhope, who, under the appearance of a man of pleasure, knew how to conceal the man of business, may have been of singular service in discovering secret intrigues and machinations." But this is pure conjecture: there were others far better qualified than he for the work, whose business it was to keep the Government at home informed on the subject, and the services of amateurs are, as a rule, lightly esteemed by responsible ministers.

From the outset of his career the new heir broke from the traditions of his race. He was a Chesterfield only in name. There was truly little in common between the "stout Stanhopes," readier with sword than with speech, unswerving in their devotion to a royal line that often badly requited the sacrifice, and the eighteenth-century courtier-statesman, who loved not the look of cold steel, and who, not content with following in the train of the new succession, advocated the most stringent severity against those who still clung to the fortunes of the exiled Stuarts. Physically and intellectually the contrast was complete. Scarcely a trait in the numerous portraits of the fourth Earl reminds us of his forbears. Who, for instance, could imagine him to have been separated by

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Maty.

only one generation from the frank and handsome cavalier represented in Lely's picture of the second Earl? And the mental dissimilarity was no less pronounced. He was emphatically a man of the new order, who took the times as he found them. Loyalty in its sentimental aspect had gone out of fashion; so he threw over the Pretender, and bound himself heart and soul to the new succession as a political arrangement well suited to the country, albeit he never manifested the least affection for the imported sovereigns of the Hanoverian line. Though a man of action in one sense, it was not the kind of action for which the Stanhopes had repute. He loved the intellectual warfare of diplomacy and the senate, but had small taste for the healthy rivalries of country life, and still less for the profession of arms. Their weaknesses were not his. If he lived loosely, it was for the sake of selfish gratification, not from being actuated by any tender weakness which might palliate the fault. Capable of friendship, he was a stranger to love, and most of his *bonnes fortunes* were paid for in hard cash, though he courted a reputation for gallantry which all around him knew to be undeserved. Generosity and magnanimity he had in abundance, but they were displayed in a way that rarely bound the recipient with a sense of gratitude; because perhaps they were not the result of impulsive emotionalism, but of calm methodical rule, which makes the recipient feel that his own individuality has nothing to do with the benefit conferred. In fact, Lord Chesterfield rarely or never acted from impulse, and was incapable of strong emotion. This type of man is very common, and very useful too. It is by such calm, self-governed natures that the world's business is best conducted; by the men who act from principle and judgment, not from feeling. Such men are often admired and trusted, but they are rarely loved; hence one is not surprised to find Lord Chesterfield spoken of as "a man who had no friends"—a description which,

if not true, and there is ample proof that it was not, reflects the general impression, the vague popular estimate of a man's character which is formed not upon his motives, but upon his methods. To be loved one must be lovable, which his lordship neither was nor affected to be. So he had his reward.

When his seat in the House of Commons had ceased to be imperilled by his nonage, young Stanhope returned to England, and at once recommenced his intervention in public affairs. We find him taking part in the debate on the Septennial Act, of which, as everybody knows, the object was to extend the duration of Parliament from three years to seven. The Bill was introduced in the House of Lords by the Duke of Devonshire, on 10 April, 1716, and passed by a large majority, the same good fortune attending it in the Lower House, where it was supported by Lord Stanhope in a speech which, as he himself informs us, was delivered with more freedom and received more favourably than his first effort. Henceforward he took frequent opportunities of acquiring in the House of Commons that confidence, ease, and felicity of diction for which he became so famous when translated to the upper chamber. His own account of how his experience progressed, given in one of his letters to his son, is presumably no novel one. "When first," says he, "I came into the House of Commons, I respected that assembly as a venerable one, and felt a certain awe upon me; but upon better acquaintance that awe soon vanished; and I discovered that of the five hundred and sixty, not above thirty could understand reason, and that all the rest were *peuple*; that those thirty only required plain common sense, dressed up in good language; and that all the rest only required flowing and harmonious periods, whether they conveyed any meaning or not; having ears to hear, but not sense to judge. These considerations led me to speak with little concern the first time, with less the second, and

with none at all the third. I gave myself no further trouble about anything except my elocution, and my style ; presuming, without much vanity, that I had common sense sufficient not to talk nonsense." With all his aplomb and elegance, however, he does not appear to have made a very strong impression on a House that was being educated into a sense of its responsibilities by Walpole. His speeches perhaps smelled too much of the lamp for that assembly, nor was his skill in reply at all commensurate with that of his attack. Probably he was not then seen at his best ; for he was still a very young man when obliged to vacate his seat in that chamber, owing to the death of his father. At all events it was in the House of Lords that he made his mark as an orator ; and there we have excellent authority<sup>1</sup> for stating that he had few rivals, and at the time probably no superior in the polished and classical eloquence indigenous to that assembly.

The judgment which he displayed in Parliament was less conspicuous in his proceedings at Court, though there were many circumstances to be pleaded in extenuation of the line which he pursued. In the traditional feud which, according to the usage of the ancient house of Hanover, existed between the reigning sovereign and the heir to the throne, it was almost a necessity that he should have sided with the Prince of Wales, whose officer he was. Moreover, the family quarrel, though conducted in a fashion equally discreditable to both parties, was in the main founded upon such glaring abuse of parental rights as might well enlist the sympathies of a generous young man in favour of the Prince. This outbreak of domestic hostilities was in the first instance due to a comparatively trivial cause, namely that the Prince took offence at the Duke of Newcastle being appointed to stand sponsor at the christening of his second son. The Prince had intended the King and his uncle, the Duke of York, to be the godfathers ; but the King named

<sup>1</sup> That of Horace Walpole, who was no friend of his at the time.

the Duke of Newcastle as second sponsor, and would hear of no other. The christening took place in the bedchamber of the Princess of Wales ; and no sooner was the ceremony over than the Prince stepped up to the Duke of Newcastle and, with a menacing gesture, told him, " You are a rascal, but I shall find you." The King was so provoked at this outrage in his presence that he pretended to understand it as a challenge—though we are assured that what the Prince meant to convey in his imperfect English was that he should find a time to be revenged—and virtually put the Prince under arrest. The arrest was, however, soon taken off ; but the Prince and Princess were ordered to leave St. James's Palace that same night. The breach between father and son widened. No longer was the latter appointed regent during the temporary visits of the King to his beloved Hanover ; no public honour was paid to his rank ; his children were removed from the guardianship of their parents, and practically imprisoned in the house of the Prince's Chamberlain, the Earl of Grantham, in Albemarle Street, by directing him not to go out of his apartments until further orders. The Prince remonstrated by writing letters, but without effect : " His Majesty not having found them satisfactory, and having besides many reasons to be discontented with the Prince's conduct in several other particulars." It was then officially communicated to the Prince that he must leave the Palace<sup>1</sup> of St. James's (whither the Prince and Princess had moved from Hampton Court, for the accouchement of the Princess), though the Princess might stay there as long as she thought proper. " But as to the

<sup>1</sup> A statement in Walpole's *Reminiscences* has led some historians (Mr. Lecky among them) to represent that the child at whose christening this quarrel took place was the future Duke of Cumberland, the victor of Culloden. This could not have been the case, as the Duke was born on 15 April, 1721, while the Prince was staying at Leicester House, whereas the baptism here referred to was that of a child born on 3 November, 1717, as stated by Smollett, vol. X, p. 345, and evident from the date of the following order. See also *Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, pp. 84 and 408 ; *Hervey*, vol. III, 278 *et seq.*



Princesses, his granddaughters, and the young Prince, it was the King's will that they should stay near him in the palace and that the Princess should be permitted to see them as often as she desired."<sup>1</sup> The Princess, however, declined to be separated from her husband, and retired with him to the house of her Great Chamberlain, Lord Grantham, in Albemarle Street, from which they removed to Kent.<sup>2</sup> Lord Stanhope was not with them on this occasion, owing to his father's illness, and his absence was sorely felt; as the Prince was accustomed to consult him when in any difficulty—a fact which goes far to show that he had already acquired a character for acumen and good sense. The bitter feeling between father and son was, there is every reason to suppose, fomented by the Earls of Stanhope and Sunderland, both enemies of the Prince and even desirous to exclude him, if possible, from the succession, if not to go further. After his expulsion from St. James's the Prince took up his residence at Leicester House, Leicester Fields (afterwards known as "the pouting-place of Princes"; for it was there that his own son, when Prince of Wales, held the headquarters of the Opposition), and set up a Court of his own, a proceeding which so angered his sire that an unprecedented notification was published in the *London Gazette* declaring to all His Majesty's lieges that

<sup>1</sup> "The Vice-Chamberlain is ordered to go to see my son and to tell him from me that he and his domestics must leave my house. He is likewise commanded to go to the Princess to tell her from me that, notwithstanding the order sent to my son, she may remain at St. James's until her health will suffer her to follow her husband. He is moreover commanded to tell the Princess from me that it is my pleasure that my grandson and granddaughters remain at St. James's, where they are, and that the Princess is permitted to come to see them when she has a mind, and that the children are permitted from time to time to go and see her and my son. The Vice-Chamberlain must further tell the Princess that, in the present situation of my family, I think that whilst she stays at St. James's she would do well to see no company."—*Message in writing from King Geo. I. to the Prince of Wales, by his Vice-Chamberlain, Mr. Cook, 2 Dec. 1717.*

<sup>2</sup> "The Prince has nobody to confer with here (at Lord Grantham's Earl), Chesterfield being new recovered from a fever."—*Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, p. 85.

the King would not receive at his Court any one who should visit the Prince. Moreover, all who enjoyed posts and places under both King and Prince were obliged to quit the service of one or other, at their option. The breach between father and son was widened by the efforts of others to a degree that excites our wonder at the control displayed by the King over his naturally ungovernable temper. Hervey tells us that, in a letter from Earl Stanhope to his Majesty, the following suspicious and atrocious suggestion occurs: "*Il est vrai c'est votre fils ; mais le fils de Dieu même a été sacrifié pour le salut de genre humain.*" In another letter it was said: "*Il faut l'enlever, et my Lord Berkley le prendra sur un vaisseau and le conduira en aucune partie de monde que votre Majesty l'ordonnera.*" And bearing in mind His Majesty's actions on previous occasions in dealing with members of his family who had given him umbrage, it is not at all too much to say that the position of the heir to the Crown was one of considerable peril. His own mother's fate pointed in that direction.<sup>1</sup> Happily the King was not wholly divested of paternal feeling towards his offspring. That he had a latent admiration for the Prince's character is shown by the fact that when Lord Sunderland endeavoured to fix some lie upon the Prince His Majesty interrupted with: "*Non, non, je connois mon fils, il n'est pas menteur : il est fou, mais il est honnête homme.*"<sup>2</sup> His opinion of his daughter-in-law was less flattering. Walpole assures us that, in speaking of her to his confidants, he always called her "*Cette diablesse Madame la Princesse,*" "whilst to my Lord Sunderland himself he was used to apply the epithets 'scoundrel, puppy, knave, and rascal.'" It was the royal way.

After that notification appeared in the *Gazette* most sensible people, of course, deserted the Prince ; but young

<sup>1</sup> Frederick, afterwards Prince of Wales (George II), was born in Hanover, 1707.

<sup>2</sup> Hervey, vol. III, pp. 282, 283, 350.

Lord Stanhope was not of their number, and paid the penalty of his fidelity by forfeiting all claim to preferment on the part of the Crown. Had it been otherwise, the influence of his relation, the Earl of Stanhope, must have succeeded in advancing his interests with the King. Nor was it long before he came into active collision with the Court. A Bill was brought into Parliament (on 13 December, 1718) for the repeal of the obnoxious Acts against occasional conformity and the growth of schism, and some clauses in the Corporation and Test Acts. The object was the relief of Protestant Dissenters by repealing the Act of 1711 against occasional conformity, and the Schism Act of 1714; also the Test and Corporation Acts. It was really the idea of Earl Stanhope, in which he was seconded by Lord Sunderland, to extend its provisions to the relief of Catholic as well as Protestant Dissenters. The Bill was taken in the House of Commons on 7 January, 1719, where Walpole and his friends strenuously opposed it, and passed by the narrow majority of 243 to 232, the majority being composed chiefly of Scotch members. The Test and Corporation Acts remained in the Statute Book for another century; but an Indemnity Act of George II discounted their effect in a great measure by throwing open all offices to Protestant Dissenters. It may be as well to mention that, by the first of these Acts, all persons in places of profit and trust who assisted at any place of worship where the Common Prayer was not used, forfeited their positions; and that, by the second, no person in Great Britain or Ireland was allowed, under pain of imprisonment, to keep any school, or be tutor or schoolmaster, who had not subscribed a declaration to conform to the Church of England, obtained a licence from the diocesan, received the sacrament according to the communion of the Church, and abstained from resorting for at least twelve months to any conventicle of the Dissenters. This Bill, which had been concerted by the Ministry by

private arrangement with the leading Dissenters, came as a surprise upon the Tories, who opposed it tooth and nail. After a stormy debate in the Lords, it was sent to the Commons, that part which related to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts being, however, struck out. In the Lower House, too, it met with violent opposition, though eventually passed; and it is not surprising that Lord Stanhope, with all his early prejudices of education, spoke and voted against it, when so cool-headed a statesman as Sir Robert Walpole set him the example; though, curious to say, that minister had been a warm opponent of the Schism Bill, which, he said, bore a greater resemblance to a decree of Julian the Apostate than to the kind of law which might be expected to emanate from a Protestant Parliament. The speech made by young Lord Stanhope against the Bill shows that his opposition was dictated rather by political consideration than by conviction, as is evident from one passage which stands out in strange contrast to his previous reputation. Referring to his early prejudices on the subject of religion, he confesses: "I thought it impossible for the honestest man in the world to be saved out of the pale of the Church, not considering that matters of opinion do not depend upon the will; that it is as natural and allowable that another man should differ in opinion from me as that I should differ from him; and that if we are both sincere we are both blameless, and should consequently have mutual indulgence for each other." The time was to come when his lordship was free to act upon this liberal conviction; when, as ruler of a population sharply divided in its religious beliefs, it was for him to show whether these words were the strict expression of his thoughts or mere rhetorical verbiage. How he bore the test we shall have an opportunity of judging when we arrive at the period during which he held the Viceroyalty of Ireland.

Another measure, in the shape of a Bill for limiting the

number of peers, was introduced on the last day of February, in the same session, by the Duke of Somerset. It proposed that the number of English peers was not to be enlarged by more than six above the existing number; that vacancies in case of extinction were to be supplied by new creations, and that instead of the sixteen peers elected for Scotland at every new Parliament, twenty-five were to be made hereditary members of the House of Lords for that kingdom—the new peers to be supplied, in case of failure of heirs male, from the other members of the Scotch peerage. This measure was generally understood to be a restraint upon the Prince of Wales, then at variance with the Ministry. Any loss which the Crown might sustain in the power of acknowledging services rendered to it, and of securing a majority in the Upper House, could only be felt by the successor to the reigning monarch; and, therefore, in proportion as it lessened the future influence of the Crown, would have the effect of diminishing the number and zeal of the Prince's friends. It was supported by the Duke of Argyll, Lord Steward of the Household, and by the Earls of Sunderland and Carlisle, and opposed by the Earl of Oxford and Earl Cowper, and generally by the Scotch peers. The debates were violent; but eventually the judges were ordered to prepare a Bill. Meanwhile a great national agitation arose upon the subject. Treatises appeared on both sides of the question; and the feeling grew that the proposed measure was an encroachment upon the fundamental maxims of the constitution. The Ministers perceived that they had gone too far; and eventually, Earl Stanhope, who was reminded that, having himself recently gained admittance into the House of Peers, he seemed inclined to shut the door after him, announced that, as the Bill had raised strange apprehensions, the further consideration of it would be postponed until a more favourable opportunity. It was accordingly dropped, and Parliament prorogued almost immediately

after. But it is worthy of remark that during the debates in the House of Commons young Lord Stanhope, probably from gratitude to its chief promoter, his relative, Earl Stanhope, voted with the minority in which the Court party found itself for the first time in the new reign.

A few weeks after the prorogation of Parliament the King set out for Hanover in company with Her Grace the Duchess of Kendal. Before His Majesty's departure another proof of the bad understanding between father and son was afforded by the regency being vested in the Lords Justices, to the exclusion of the Prince of Wales, who, in fact, had never been appointed Regent of the Kingdom, except on the occasion of the King's first visit to his electoral dominion. A still more galling intimation was conveyed by the duty of holding levees in the royal absence being conferred, not upon the Prince and Princess of Wales, but upon His Majesty's youthful daughters. This naturally occasioned a great public scandal, and the Prince and Princess retired into the country to digest the affront. Though we have no record of the fact, it is probable that young Lord Stanhope, as an officer of their household, accompanied them; and if so, it is likewise probable that he found the dull routine of their seclusion hard to bear. There is, too, the probability that he may have obtained leave of absence from his duties to revisit Paris about this time; for in a letter from that city, bearing no year-date, to an unknown correspondent, he expresses himself thus:—

“PARIS, 27 *June*, —.

“I cannot help mentioning to you now what I spoke to you of in England, and desiring to know whether you have taken any step in it yet. I own, the more I think of it, the more I wish it may be thought either proper or practicable; it being in my mind the only way of coming into any business and leaving an idle life that I am grown weary of. I leave entirely to you, as the best judge, what methods to take in

it; and rely so much upon your friendship that I am convinced you will not omit any [*sic*] that may promote it. I should only be glad to know whether you think there is any probability of success, that I may regulate my conduct in the next session accordingly. For as, of the one side, I should be very willing to engage in debate and the business of the House as well as I am able, which, though I should do very indifferently, I could not do worse than the present possessor, so, of the other side, to enter the lists and get a broken head merely as a volunteer would be childish and impertinent.”<sup>1</sup>

We see here the young man chafing at his forced inaction, and casting about for some employment which would afford an opening for his abilities. His position in the Prince of Wales's household cannot have been a bed of roses, for he was never liked by the Princess, whose influence over her husband was all-powerful; and as there was not a bond of personal liking between the Prince and himself, occasion may have frequently arisen in which the desirability of retaining that position at the cost of his future advancement may have been a moot question with him. However, nothing was to come of these doubts, at least for the present; his unknown friend may possibly have dissuaded him from a course thus indistinctly shadowed in his mind, and the opportunity, when it arrived, was to come in a different shape from what he proposed. For one who was not attached to the Prince of Wales by any strong personal tie there was small inducement at the present time to remain of his party; and it is hardly to be wondered at that a young man who had ambitions of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bradshaw's edition of the *Letters*, vol. II, p. 670. The editor attributes it to a later date (1720), and thinks it must have been addressed to some one in office or at Court; but from internal evidence it would appear to have been addressed to some very intimate friend, probably Lord Scarborough, then in attendance on the Prince; and the closest intimate of Lord Stanhope.

public success should seriously think of changing sides. The antipathy between the King and his eldest son was of long standing, and appeared to be only strengthened by time. It had existed before they left Hanover, and had since then been inflamed by a circumstance which afterwards embittered the relations between George II and his own heir, the appropriation from the Civil List of a yearly allowance of £100,000 to the Prince of Wales. A motion was brought forward by the Tories that such appropriation should be made by Parliament; and as this was overruled by the Ministerial party, a complete estrangement ensued between the latter and the disgusted Prince, driving him into the ranks of the Opposition, thus establishing a precedent followed by the first four Princes of Wales after the death of Queen Anne.

It became, in fact, a tradition of the royal house that the heir-apparent should *de facto* be always in Opposition; and the nation learned by degrees to recognize its existence. "That family," said Lord Carteret one day in full council, "always has quarrelled, and always will quarrel from generation to generation."<sup>1</sup> Of course, in so unequal a conflict the Prince was bound to suffer; and his royal father did not hesitate to make things unpleasant for him. When the question arose of appointing a Regency during the King's visit to Hanover in 1716, the latter was unwilling to entrust the Prince with the Government during his absence, unless by joining other persons in the commission and limiting his power by the most rigorous restrictions. The opposition of the Cabinet, headed by Lord Townshend, to so unconstitutional a proceeding led him to give way; but he carried his point so far that, instead of giving the Prince the title of Regent, he named him Guardian of the Realm and Lieutenant, with unusual restriction to his authority,<sup>2</sup> directing that the Duke of Argyll, whom he

<sup>1</sup> Lord Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. I, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> Given under the date of 5 July, 1716, in Coxe's MSS.



suspected of encouraging the Prince in ambitious views, should be dismissed from all his employments. Moreover, His Majesty, while abroad, continued to direct all State business at home, thus virtually reducing the Prince's office to a nullity; and this in spite of Lord Townshend's urgent representations that the Prince should be entrusted with a discretionary power, so as to meet unexpected difficulties or altered circumstances.<sup>1</sup> So far, however, the variance had remained to a great extent a Court secret; but when, upon the occasion of the christening already referred to, it became an open breach, followed by expulsion from the palace, and authenticated by published documents, common decency was laid aside; the whole nation became alive to the fact that a domestic war was raging, and took sides after the invariable usage in such cases. The hostile camps were duly marked out. The Prince pitched his at Leicester House, where he openly raised the standard of opposition against his august sire; and the latter responded to this defiance by framing a scheme for obtaining an Act of Parliament by which the Prince, on succeeding to the throne, should be compelled to relinquish the Hanover electorate—a scheme which he reluctantly abandoned on the advice of the Lord Chancellor. The King's animosity to his son extended to all connected with him. As we have already seen, those who visited at Leicester House were excluded from St. James's; those who held office in the Prince's household were marked men; and it is no little to young Lord Stanhope's credit that seeing, as he clearly did, how hopeless his chances of advancement were while he retained his office in that establishment, he should have abandoned that project of changing sides, which we know he at one time entertained, when loyalty to his master was a distinct loss to himself. A young man of his family influence and acknowledged talents would have been gladly welcomed

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. I, 361.

into the ranks of the Ministerialists, and might have hoped for substantial rewards. That he resolutely shut his eyes to the brilliant prospect and remained steadfast to a party which had nothing to give him in return, showed a magnanimity not very common in the times of which we are writing.

It is, however, a pity that the same magnanimity was not displayed in the young lord's conduct towards the Princess of Wales. For some reason or other he had failed to impress that lady favourably, and the reason was in all probability, as Lord Hervey assures us, that his tendency to sarcasm led him occasionally to indulge in remarks which she considered disrespectful to herself. "She [Queen Caroline] has often told me," says Lord Hervey in 1734, "that she knew at Leicester Fields he used formerly to turn her into ridicule, but that she had then frequently, between jest and earnest, advised him not to provoke her, telling him at the same time that, though she acknowledged he had more wit than her, yet she would assure him she had a most bitter tongue, and would certainly pay him any debts of that kind with most exorbitant interest. She said he always used to deny the fact, and do it again the moment he got out of the room, or, if she turned her head, without staying till he had turned his back."<sup>1</sup> Whatever the reason, it is beyond doubt that she never afterwards believed in his sincerity, and the conduct which led to his mistrust was probably the first, and certainly one of the greatest, mistakes committed by his lordship. Though it is impossible to excuse or even palliate such disrespect, more especially on the part of one who was an officer of her household, it must be owned that the Princess had peculiarities which were not calculated to promote reverence in the minds of those about her. Despite her rank, and according to the general report, she was not what could by any stretch of courtesy be termed a well-bred or lady-like woman. Her person was,

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, pp. 323-4.

save to her own husband, unattractive,<sup>1</sup> her manner undignified, and her conversation, to say the least of it, unrefined. In those days language, even in high quarters, was less restrained than now : people called a spade by its proper, or rather improper, name when they had to speak of it ; but there was an understanding that the subject should be sparingly dealt with, at any rate in the society of ladies. The Princess, however, manifested a decided preference for "spades," introduced them habitually into her conversation, and always by their name. Decent women scarcely knew how to look when she addressed them, as Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, complained ; and in speaking to men she often used expressions which must have astonished the hearers. It is little wonderful, therefore, that a clever, critical, and supercilious young spark, trained in the outwardly refined atmosphere of Versailles, should have seen in this homely great lady much to excite ridicule ; but to have betrayed his feelings so openly as to attract even her attention, was a crime against good taste, good manners, chivalry, and common prudence, that richly deserved the punishment which was destined to overtake it when the object of his satire enjoyed the power of revenge.

Meanwhile, the feud between the royal father and son gradually attained its height, and then, as is the habit of things, began to subside. At one time it reached such dimensions that there was a feverish anxiety in both Houses of Parliament lest the subject should be introduced in debate ; and when upon a certain occasion in the House of Lords, the Prince of Wales being present and a large attendance of peers, Lord North solemnly rose, as he said, "to take notice of the great ferment there is in the nation," and then paused, everybody was filled with apprehension as to what might follow these ominous words.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> How Sir R. Walpole ungallantly described it is told in a footnote to p. 63, in Hervey, vol. I (Croker's Edition).

<sup>2</sup> Mahon, *History*, vol. I, p. 442.

They proved, however, to refer only to the prevalent scarcity of silver, which was interfering with the course of trade, and the House drew a sigh of relief. After this climax had been duly laughed at, the reaction began to set in. Other and more pressing subjects engaged the public attention. The Coinage, the Mutiny Bill, the Spanish question, the Bangorian controversy, the Quadruple Alliance, the South Sea fiasco, and a host of other questions, diverted men's minds in turn from the domestic concerns of the Royal Family; and the high conflicting parties themselves began to cool down under the sobering influence of time. Gradually an improvement took place in the relations between the two. Public honours were once more accorded to the Prince, though he was not admitted to any share of public trust; and his friends were again received at the King's Court. Of course young Lord Stanhope participated in the benefits of the change, and began to attract the notice of those whose notice was likely to be useful. In the Committee of Inquiry of the House of Commons into the conduct of the directors of the South Sea Company we have an instance of the growing influence of Lord Stanhope. The case for Mr. Charles Stanhope, Secretary to the Treasury, and a kinsman of the lately deceased Earl Stanhope, was relegated to an investigation which threatened very unpleasant consequences to himself, from which he was only rescued by a very small majority. And on this occasion we find the chairman of the Committee (Mr. Broderick) writing to his friend Lord Middleton: "Lord Stanhope, son to Lord Chesterfield, carried off a pretty many by mentioning in the strongest terms the memory of the late lord of that name" (Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. II, p. 31). Death deprived him of his friend, Earl Stanhope; but Lord Townshend, the successor to that nobleman as Secretary of State, thought well of the young man; and beginning as his patron, ended by becoming his firm and constant friend. So far, things promised well; and with the

rising fortunes of the Prince the prospects of his adherents brightened considerably, only, however, to be clouded again. It was hoped that at the King's next visit to Hanover, which took place in 1720, the Prince would be appointed Regent; but this hope was doomed to disappointment. The Regency was put into the hands of Lords Justices, and, by way of requital, the Prince's friends gave their votes to the Opposition in the next session of Parliament. Then came the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, which caused no small perturbation to the Court party, but in which the Prince's own hands<sup>1</sup> were not so clean as to favour active hostilities on the part of his adherents. Still, with regard to the Prince himself, the situation had improved. In the following year (1721) he was allowed to accompany the King in a summer tour through the western provinces, and his children were restored to their natural guardians. A formal reconciliation had taken place on St. George's Day, 1720, and was celebrated with public rejoicings, which enable us to judge of the serious light in which the royal domestic bickerings had been regarded by the nation. One of the public newspapers of the time gravely informed its readers how "the officers of the two courts kissed, embraced and congratulated each other upon this auspicious reconciliation."<sup>2</sup> There is, however, no sign that Lord Stanhope participated in this reunion of hearts. On the contrary, his name appears among those who spoke in the Commons against the Court on a question concerning a small tax to be laid upon civil employments (1721), when he answered his friend and kinsman, Henry Pelham, who supported the measure. But a change was impending. In May, 1722, the King received from the Duke of Orleans notice of a

<sup>1</sup> The Prince was Governor of "The Welch Copper Company," one of the innumerable speculations induced by the fame of the South Sea scheme, and which proved a disastrous failure. That he was also concerned in the Mississippi scheme is tolerably evident from Lady Suffolk's *Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 46. See also Smollett, vol. X, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Suffolk, vol. I, p. 53.

conspiracy formed against his person and Government; and this led to an outburst of loyalty which, for the time being, levelled all distinctions of party. It is unnecessary here to go into the particulars of that plot, which included among its suspected accomplices persons of the very highest distinction. The Duke of Ormond was, in fact, designated as the leader of the expedition, in favour of the Pretender, which it was proposed to dispatch from Cadiz; and several of the chief exiles of 1715, in addition to many distinguished individuals at home, took part in the enterprise, which was however frustrated by the elements (Mahon, vol. I, pp. 498 *et seq.*); but is chiefly interesting to us as affording the occasion upon which Bishop Atterbury was committed to the Tower, greatly to the disgust of Churchmen throughout the entire kingdom. Just before this discovery Parliament had been dissolved, and a new election took place, in which Lord Stanhope was returned for the borough of Lostwithiel, and in which the Government succeeded in obtaining a large majority. In the first session of this new Parliament a motion was made and carried to augment the standing army by 4000 men; and the new member for Lostwithiel signalled his loyalty to the monarch by speaking strongly in favour of it. This demonstration of budding repentance on the part of such a distinguished prodigal met with an immediate reward. A few months after the speech was uttered he was made Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard—an appointment which, if not particularly well suited to the recipient, was no less a distinguished mark of royal favour; which was emphasized by the fact that the King, who was just then setting out on one of his frequent visits to Hanover, again excluded the Prince of Wales from the Regency during his absence. Young Lord Stanhope's military office had previously been held by his friend Lord Townshend; and it is characteristic of the times that, when the latter was handing it over to his successor, he strongly advised the new captain to make it more profitable than

he himself had done by "disposing of the places." Lord Stanhope's reply was worthy of a man who, whatever his feelings may have been, never shared in the pecuniary corruption of that corrupt age: "I would rather," said he, "follow your lordship's example than your lordship's advice." And it is a pleasant tradition of the service that none of the commissions in the Guards were ever sold by him, or by his friend Lord Scarborough, who was in command of the second regiment—a tradition long more honoured in the breach than in the observance. His preferment did not, however, prevail with him to desert his old master, though strong incentives were not wanting to make him do so. Amongst these were the offer of a dukedom for his father, who, on his part, would have been only too glad to accept it. But the son was wiser than his sire, and, greatly to the old nobleman's disgust, declined the bait. "He thought," says his biographer,<sup>1</sup> "that the younger sons of a duke ought to have larger fortunes than either his brothers or his children were likely to have. The old Earl of Chesterfield, though shy of the Court, was less indifferent to its trappings. He expressed his displeasure at his son's refusal, and perhaps was happy in having a new excuse to justify his ill-treatment of him." In this matter, as seemingly in most others, the younger man decided for himself. "My father," as he once remarked, "was neither desirous nor able to advise me"; and there is no doubt that he decided wisely upon the grounds alleged, though we must not lose sight of the higher motive by which he was actuated; namely, as he avowed, the consciousness that the reward was altogether disproportionate to the services which he had as yet been able to render the State. Looking at the matter from that point of view, it must be confessed that he was right; but few ambitious men of his age would have had the self-control, or the conscientiousness, to be swayed by such an objection in deciding as he did

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 55.

For some time after this promotion young Lord Stanhope remained quiescent. Walpole was now supreme, and between him and Walpole there was never a very good understanding. His friend Lord Townshend was in attendance upon the King, who was engaged in difficult negotiations relative to the Duchy of Sleswick and divers new treaties with the continental powers; and Great Britain enjoyed profound tranquillity, save for that small matter of "Wood's half-pence" in the sister kingdom; the trial of a Lord Chancellor (Macclesfield) for venal practices; and a few other transient excitements in which the young lord probably found little to interest him. There was another trifling circumstance, too, which may have dispelled the charm which most young orators find in the House of Commons. His lordship's style of speaking, however refined and classical—perhaps, indeed, on account of these very qualities—was scarcely suited to a popular assembly, and its artificial graces were somewhat marred by certain peculiarities of accent and gesture which invited mimicry. The invitation was not long in being responded to. "There was a member of that house," says his biographer,<sup>1</sup> "who, though not possessed of superior powers, had the dangerous talent of making those whom he answered seem ridiculous, by mimicking their tone and action. Lord Stanhope was often exposed to this unequal conflict, and always found himself hurt by it"—a species of annoyance which, it was hinted, prevented his lordship from displaying his abilities in the House of Commons so frequently as he afterwards did in the House of Peers. None are so sensitive to ridicule as those who indulge in it most freely themselves; and we have here a sufficient explanation of the fact that the young lord's avidity for parliamentary distinction experienced a temporary oppression which was only removed by his translation to a rarer atmosphere. From letters written by him about

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 62.



this time,<sup>1</sup> it appears that he accompanied his father on a visit to the Peak Country (probably to Buxton) in search of health, returning thence to Bretby,<sup>2</sup> an exile, which he abhorred. He begs one of his correspondents<sup>3</sup> to make his excuses to the Prince of Wales for not paying his duty on the latter's birthday, pleading the alarming condition of his father as the cause of his absence; and for himself, avowing that "were he inclined to a religious melancholy, he should fancy himself in Hell." The reply was a suggestion that "Purgatory" might be a more fitting description of his state; to which he assents diffidently that "souls always stay there till they go to Heaven, which I doubt will be my case," adding, "I should be very glad of existing a considerable time in London on my way to it." This period of enforced idleness does not seem to have agreed with him; for he relapsed into that imprudence which his natural bent for sarcasm led him too frequently to indulge. George I thought proper just then to revive the Order of the Bath, which had fallen into abeyance; and his lordship was one of the thirty-eight persons selected by His Majesty as wearers of "the Red Ribband," another being his brother, William Stanhope. His lordship not only declined the proffered honour but censured his brother for accepting it. Not content with thus

<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, II, p. 675 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Bretby (or Bradby) is described by Lewis as a chapelry in the parish of Repton (county of Derby), three miles from Burton-on-Trent. Near the church is the site of an old baronial mansion which was fortified by royal licence in A.D. 1300; but its materials are supposed to have been used by the first Earl of Chesterfield in the erection of a residence which he fortified and garrisoned for the King in 1642, and which, after a stout defence, was captured by a strong detachment sent by Colonel Gill (*v.* pp. 23, 35, 40, 99, *ante*). It was taken down in 1780, and rebuilt by Sir William Stanhope. Bretby Park, the seat of the Earl Carnarvon, who is lord of the manor and sole landowner, is about 700 acres in extent and contains two or three hundred head of deer. Since the death of the sixth Earl the church (St. Wynstow) has been the burial-place of the Chesterfield family (*v.* p. 40, note, *ante*).

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Howard, afterwards Lady Suffolk.

evinced his want of appreciation of the royal favour, which in itself was not calculated to advance his interests at Court, he clinched his imprudence by publishing a lampoon upon one of the new knights who had happened to lose the ensign of the order.<sup>1</sup> This production may, or may not, have been as "witty and satirical" a ballad as it is claimed to be; but it was neither becoming nor safe to poke fun in the circumstances, and the peccant giber was soon made to feel the effects of his indecorum. When the King next set out for Hanover (1725), "among the changes that were made at Court, young Lord Stanhope shared the fate of Mr. Pulteney, and was dismissed from his place<sup>2</sup> of Captain of the Guard." Being now excluded, by his own choice, from the House of Commons, and by his imprudence, from the Court of his sovereign, and being personally unpopular at that of the heir-apparent, his prospects were for the time anything but cheerful for a man to whom active employment was as the breath of his nostrils. There was a probability that he might have settled down into a mere ordinary fine gentleman, dividing his time between society, the gaming-table, and that literary diletantism to which he was always more or less inclined. But fortune had better things in store for him. By the death of his father, which occurred early in 1726, he became Earl of Chesterfield; and with the assumption of that title a field of action more suited to his powers was opened to him—a field in which he distinguished himself beyond most of those who were his compeers, though much remained to be done before he was free to enter the lists.

<sup>1</sup> See Ballad on Sir William Magan, reprinted in *Wit and Wisdom of Lord Chesterfield*, at p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 62.

### III

## THE NEW EARL OF CHESTERFIELD MAKES HIS DÉBUT

**W**HEN the fourth Earl of Chesterfield succeeded to his inheritance he was in his thirty-second year, a time of life when the physical and intellectual qualities of a man are at their meridian. In regard to the former he had not been specially favoured by Nature. We may not believe the acrid testimony of one who bore him no good will, that his person was "as disagreeable as it was possible for a human figure to be without being deformed";<sup>1</sup> but after making every allowance for the exaggeration of malevolence, there is no doubt that the new peer was anything but an Adonis. He has been described as short, thick, and clumsily made,<sup>2</sup> with a head so disproportioned to his height that a candid friend<sup>3</sup> once told him he "looked like a stunted giant." His features were strongly marked; the brow not large, but having that portion which phrenologists assign to the perceptive faculties well developed; his eyebrows unusually high, arched, and bushy; his eyes full, prominent, dark, cold, and piercing, a lurking twinkle always in them, with heavy lids, and a look as though he were taking the measure of those

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 95 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> His lordship owned to being "under five-foot eight"; how much under he did not say. George II used to speak of him as "a dwarf baboon," and he was generally known as "little Stanhope."

<sup>3</sup> Ben Ashurst.

to whom their glance was directed ; his nose large and aquiline ; his mouth well shaped and firm, the upper lip as if kept tightly in its place by an effort of constraint, as it probably was, for his lordship's teeth were unsightly by reason of their blackness, and he did not love to show them. But the head, "Polyphemus-like," as his enemies called it, was well set on, and well carried too. Dwarfish he might be, but not undignified ; he had the *bel air*, looked his rank, and was, if anything, too self-possessed, his serene composure having a perceptible taint of artificiality which served to strengthen the prevalent, but false, impression that the man was insincere. His manners were perfect : even surly Johnson, who was no bad judge, admitted that ;<sup>1</sup> and his conversation, though marred by a dissonant voice,<sup>2</sup> was sparkling and witty beyond perhaps that of any other personage at Court, where he was not less feared than admired for that sarcastic brilliancy which, rocket-like, often turned back to wound the source from which it was launched. "Lord Chesterfield was allowed by everybody," says his chief detractor,<sup>3</sup> "to have more conversible entertaining table-wit than any man of his time ; his propensity to ridicule, in which he indulged himself with infinite humour and no distinction, and with inexhaustible spirits and no discretion, made him sought and feared, liked and not loved, by most of his acquaintance. No sex, no relation, no rank, no power, no profession, no friendship, no obligation was a shield from those pointed, glittering weapons, that seemed to shine only to a stander-by, but cut deep in those they touched. All his acquaintance were indifferently the objects of his satire, and served promiscuously to feed that voracious appetite for abuse that made him fall on everything that came in his way, and treat every one of his companions

<sup>1</sup> "His manner was exquisitely elegant."—Croker's *Boswell*, vol. III, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Cowper's *Diary*, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 98.

in rotation at the expense of the rest. I remember two lines in a satire of Boileau's that fit him exactly:—

Mais c'est un petit fou qui se croit tout permit  
Et qui pour un bon mot va perdre vingt amis."

Hervey goes on to say that his lordship "by these means often, for want of prudence, sacrificed his interest to his vanity," which was no doubt the case. Men rarely forgive the being made to appear ridiculous; women, never; and the unpardonable indecorum with which he dared to make even the Princess of Wales a butt for his impudent satire was amply revenged when that lady became Queen. It was a mistake which may be said to have wrecked his whole career; nor can his punishment excite our pity, though we may regret the want of magnanimity that rejected all his efforts to atone for the youthful error.

Such accomplishments as he possessed were purely intellectual.<sup>1</sup> He had no dilettantism to speak of. The art of painting did not find in him much of a patron, and that of music he despised, turning the royal enthusiasm for Handel into ridicule, as was his foolish wont. Architecture he favoured somewhat, as he had reason to avail himself of its resources at times; and for bric-à-brac he had the fashionable leaning. But all his æstheticism lay in the world of books. He affected the society of men of letters, and himself dabbled in their craft. With the literary coterie—Swift, Addison, Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, etc.—he was ambitious to associate. "I used to think myself in company as much above me when I was with Mr. Addison or Mr. Pope," he declared, "as if I had been with all the princes of Europe,"<sup>2</sup> and though at the time of which we are now writing he had not yet fleshed his pen in the public literature of the day, he was privately known as a clever writer of *vers de société* and other trifles. If

<sup>1</sup> He disliked field sports. "Eat game, but do not be your own butcher and kill it," was one of his aphorisms.—Lord Carnarvon, *Mem.*, p. xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xl.

not a very profound scholar, he was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the classic authors, and was upon the whole a judicious critic, as his keen appreciation of Lord Bolingbroke's writings goes to show. But it was in oratory that his chief strength lay. From his very first appearance as a public speaker he showed that he possessed the inestimable gift of fixing the attention of his hearers. Whatever they might think of the matter of his speeches, men were attracted by their form; and he had the knack of putting things so that, for the moment at least, what he said appeared to be dictated by sound good sense. No opportunity for judging of his powers as a statesman had yet arisen; but an impression had already been formed which is rarely produced by youthful members of Parliament, namely that he was over-cautious; and this was so far increased after his translation to the Upper House that we find Bolingbroke accusing him of "timidity."<sup>1</sup> Regarding him, then, as a candidate for public life, he was a young man with great possibilities, who might be expected to go far if the chance were offered him, always provided that his facility for making enemies did not stand in his way; in regard to which latter acknowledged weakness, the few who wished him well shook their heads.

As to his character in the more personal and subjective sense of that term, it was, so far as morality is concerned, the product of the age in which he lived. Of orthodox religion he may be said to have had none; but his rejection of creeds did not imply atheism pure and simple, any more than it did with Voltaire, whom in this respect he closely resembled. There is abundant evidence that he recognized the elementary truths of Christianity, though never acknowledging the dominant claim of any particular sect; and if his observance of Christian precept was defective, he never sought to justify himself for the omission, as

<sup>1</sup> *Marchmont Papers*, vol. I, p. 11.

the free-thinker pure and simple usually glories in doing. His moral practice was what might have been expected from the laxity of his views. So far as the laws of honour, the elastic rules of society, the duties of his station, and respect for the laws of the land permitted, he acted just as he pleased, taking what good the gods provided with the ready acquiescence of untrammelled youth. By his own regretful confession he lived much too freely in early life; and free-living in the eighteenth century, like free-thought in the present, implied a good deal. But it may be pleaded in extenuation of this laxity that its consequences were, so far as is apparent, confined to himself; he does not seem to have wrecked the peace of families, or to have attained the distinction of a public scandal; and the character of a Don Juan, which he weakly affected, is allowed by those who had the best opportunities for judging to have been wholly undeserved. And there is one circumstance which redounds greatly to his credit. In an age when corruption was the rule his personal honour remained untarnished by even the suspicion of jobbery. Other men might have their price; but neither money nor place could buy Lord Chesterfield; and such official preferment as he obtained was rarely, or never, of his own choosing—a fact which should not be forgotten when history is reckoning up his merits and defects.

One other remarkable characteristic of the new peer remains to be noticed; and it is not the less singular when we take into consideration those physical peculiarities to which attention has been drawn, and which in the case of most young men would have proved an insuperable barrier to advancement. Despite a figure, a manner, a voice, a gesture which suggested and often met with ridicule, he possessed the invaluable gift of impressing all who came in contact with him. From the very first moment of his entrance into public life he carried weight; and we have seen that even as a young officer of the

Prince's household he was regarded by his royal master in the light of a prudent counsellor whose advice in serious exigencies could be ill dispensed with ; whilst that remarkable woman, the Princess of Wales, acknowledged that his influence over her husband was at the time even greater than her own ; and, while she hated, feared him. In like manner, the House of Commons, though it showed little reverence for his lordship's peculiar affectations, listened to his speeches with an attention which it rarely accords to youthful members ; and he had scarcely appeared in the House of Lords before he made his personality felt. From the outset he was never treated as a negligible quantity. Turn where we will among the public and private records of the time, his name is constantly cropping up. Alike in the *Marchmont Papers*, in the *Hervey Memoirs*, and in the garrulous pages of Walpole, we are perpetually coming across him as a factor in politics, in Court intrigue, or in social life. Some of this prominence may have been due to his lofty rank and antecedents ; but it cannot have been much, for the simple reason that he was only one of a number possessing equal advantages in this respect, but who were suffered to rest in comparative oblivion. It was the man, not his rank, that won the prominence to which he undoubtedly attained.<sup>1</sup>

Thus equipped for the campaign that awaited him, the young Earl took his seat in the House of Lords, and was not long in showing there that he carried thither the same principles which he had professed in the Commons—among them that of unswerving opposition to the Court party. A few months after he had inherited his title, the complaint of a want of form in a message from the King occasioned a smart contest among the peers, and we find

<sup>1</sup> It was not till the death of his father that his ambition showed itself. It was at first chiefly manifested by an anxiety to please. "Call it vanity, if you will," he writes, "and possibly it was so ; but my great object was to make every man I met like me, and every woman love me. I often succeeded, but why? By taking pains." (Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. III, p. 485 ; and Letter of 21 July, 1752.)



Lord Chesterfield speaking in vindication of the privileges of their House, though he avoided joining in the protest which was entered and signed by the dissenting lords.<sup>1</sup> In the following year (1727) he adopted a similar course in a debate on a clause, in a Money Bill, which gave the sovereign a discretionary power of applying part of the supplies in any way he might think proper for the security of the kingdom and the maintenance of the peace of Europe.<sup>2</sup> Now, if there was one branch of the royal prerogative upon which George I was more jealous of interference than another, it was that of his having a supreme and incontestable right to deal with subsidies granted to the Crown as he judged best, and to question his jurisdiction in this particular was to commit the unpardonable sin. In his little Court at Hanover the Elector was absolute; he had not to crave for moneys to be granted by his subjects, nor was he held accountable for his disbursements; and he resented strongly both the difficulty experienced in getting subsidies from an English Parliament and the kind of audit to which he was subjected in respect of these allowances. We find him complaining to his intimate friends that he had come over to England to be "a begging King," and "that it was very hard for him to be continually opposed in his application for supplies, while he only asked that he might employ them for the good of the nation." Whether His Majesty was, or was not, deceiving himself upon the latter point, need not be argued here; but it may be taken for granted that Lord Chesterfield's proceedings in opposition were not likely to further his interests at Court; and that, had the sovereign been spared much longer, the subject would have been made to feel the consequences of that imprudence. From these he was to a great extent spared by the sudden demise of his royal master whilst on one of his annual progresses (in 1727) to his beloved Hanover. The story

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, pp. 61, 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

goes that just as King George had driven across the German frontier a letter from his lately deceased wife<sup>1</sup> was put into his hands. It is said to have contained a protestation of her innocence of the charge upon which her husband had immured her for life, and a summons to him to appear within a year and a day at the Divine tribunal, there to answer for his conduct to her. No sooner was the citation received than it was obeyed. The contents of this letter (whether fabricated or not) are said to have so overwhelmed the King that he fell into convulsions, which lasted for some time. Then, putting his head out of the coach window, he gasped hoarsely, "To Osnaburg, quick, to Osnaburg!" The coachman lashed his horses and drove on; but ere the journey was completed his royal master had expired, as was currently reported, of an apoplectic fit.<sup>2</sup> We give the story merely for what it is worth.

*Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi!* The new King, on being informed by Sir Robert Walpole of his lamented father's decease, expressed his incredulity in distressingly strong terms at first; but once convinced of the melancholy fact, stepped into that father's shoes with great alacrity. He was forty-four years old, having been born in 1683; and possessed some advantages over his predecessor inasmuch as he could speak the language of his subjects more or less indifferently, though he never did so by preference, and was not quite so averse from making their acquaintance, albeit his love for them was not much greater. Of kingly qualities he possessed few; his person was insignificant, his manners brutal, and his temper ungovernable; but he had plenty of courage, a tolerable sense of justice, and a certain amount of dignity when he chose to assume it. Unembarrassed himself by the shackles of morality or

<sup>1</sup> She died in virtual imprisonment at the Castle of Ahlen on 13 November, 1726.

<sup>2</sup> Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. II, p. 167.



*Georgius III. G. Mag. Brit. Fran. et Hib. Rex. S. D.  
 Roman. et Hunn. Sac. R. I. Arch. Thesaur. Princ. Elector &c  
 Inauguratus n. die Octobris 1727.*

*Sold by John Bowles Prints Map seller at the Black Horse in Cornhill*



religion, he did not seek to impose them on others. The decencies of ordinary life were not much in evidence at a Court whose most distinguished ornaments were his own mistresses, and unscrupulous obedience was the only virtue required of those who served him. It may be questioned whether, even at that most degraded epoch of our country's history, a *régime* founded on such principles would have been lasting. Symptoms were not wanting from time to time that King George's lieges were tiring of a rule unbacked by respect, or by any obligation which was not felt to have passed away; an alien rule that did not affect to consider the interests of the land and people whose destinies were entrusted to its care; a Court whose example was a scandal to every decent household; a family presided over by an openly faithless husband, and in which an unnatural feud raged between parent and child; a greedy, avaricious, and parsimonious rule, ever intent upon extracting from its subjects as much as those subjects could be induced to part with, and grudging to spend the money on those objects for which that money was granted, while lavishing it upon those which it was a shame to speak of. Under the first two Hanoverians the sentiment of loyalty was fast dying out among the mass of the people. It had been rudely shaken under the Stuarts; had been only imperfectly revived under the wise, though not wholly impartial, or edifying, interregnum of William III; had become more or less lukewarm under the adventitious glories of Anne; but had cooled perceptibly under her successor; and though kindled into a transient glow at the coronation of George II, from whom much was hoped, rapidly chilled as those hopes were discovered to be baseless. Nowadays England is said to be a republic in all but the name; but had the third monarch of the Brunswick line resembled his two predecessors it would have been one most probably in name also. People, when they talk of the insane folly and fatuity of George III,

should remember that to his pure life and example, his inflexible honesty and simple English ways, is due the fact that we are now living under the beneficent and stainless rule of his descendants. Had he proved to be a repetition of his father and grandfather, it is more than doubtful that he would have remained seated on the throne of England for over half a century, and almost positive that his son would not have succeeded him. Owing to his long and worthy reign the sentiment of loyalty acquired a strength that enabled it to survive temporary checks, until the advent of a still more worthy daughter of the same line kindled it to a glow which shows no sign of abatement in the reign of her successor.

The clouds which, there is little doubt, were just then charged with dangerous electricity that might play havoc with the new succession, were fortunately dispersed for the time being by powerful influences behind the throne. Sir Robert Walpole and Queen Caroline proved to be two good fairies whose combined efforts succeeded in guarding the fortunes of the royal house. As a woman, nay, even as a mother, the latter certainly had few claims to laudation; but as a wife she was perfect. All her tendencies, all her aspirations, all her ambitions, centred in one of the most faithless and exacting husbands that ever woman was blessed with. She knew his defects—he took very good care that she should; but they never caused her to swerve from the devoted loyalty and abject self-sacrifice which her own position and her husband's brutal selfishness demanded. And she had her reward. So far as that husband was capable of the sentiment of love, his heart was hers alone. His infidelities, of which she was oddly chosen to be the confidante, never had the slightest effect upon that deep and ardent affection which lasted till her death. The Kielmansegges and the Yarmouths were merely adjuncts of the royal *ménage*, high state officials,

who, in conformity with Hanoverian usage, attended upon the royal pleasure; but from these he always returned to the true wife whom he loved, and who he knew loved him, while she, on her part, gulped down his curious revelations with resignation, thinking only how she might please and benefit this most unfaithful of spouses. It is a curious history. From the date of her marriage, in 1705, Caroline of Anspach seemed to have only one ambition, that of sacrificing herself to her husband's whims, and of advancing his real or fancied interests; though, as time rolled on, this subservience was transformed into a complete, though unsuspected, ascendancy. She learned to see into the future more keenly than he did, and she availed herself of this insight, but always in such a way that, whilst guiding him as surely as the rudder does the ship, the initiative always seemed to rest with him. But her judgment told her that the weight of responsibility thus resting upon her could not be borne alone. As a woman, and a foreigner, and also by virtue of her own exalted position, she could not obtain that intimate acquaintance with the current of national thought and the working of that subtle machinery which utilized and directed its force, unless by the aid of some familiar who, gazing from a lower standpoint, was able to discern and influence its workings; and after a careful study of the various officers who essayed to control the ship of state, she selected as captain (and prevailed upon her husband to ratify the choice) him who was undoubtedly the fittest. In the previous reign Sir Robert Walpole had been no favourite with the heir-apparent or his consort. He was essentially "the King's minister," and as such necessarily no friend to the Prince of Wales, who was in opposition. Walpole's rivals even suggested that he did his utmost to estrange the father from the son, and that it was owing to him the slight had been put upon the Prince of passing him over when regencies were appointed during the King's visits to

Hanover.<sup>1</sup> Naturally enough, George II was disposed to resent this; and when upon that morning visit to Richmond Lodge for the purpose of announcing his succession, Sir Robert asked whom the new King would be pleased to appoint to draw up the necessary declaration to the Privy Council, presuming, no doubt, that duty would be relegated to himself, His Majesty curtly replied "Compton." But the rebuffed minister soon had his revenge. Sir Spencer Compton was, and felt himself to be, incompetent for the task; so he begged Sir Robert to draw up the Declaration for him, which the good-natured minister at once did. Such transactions do not long remain secrets at a Court, and the story soon gained currency, to Sir Robert's manifest advantage. Nor were there wanting other samples of the magnanimity which the great-hearted minister had displayed to his more fortunate rivals. He had obtained from the late King the Garter for Lord Scarborough; he had often bestowed places upon other personal adherents of the Prince; but what most of all stood him in good stead, he had always treated Caroline, when Princess of Wales, with outward respect, and this certainly impressed her with esteem for his abilities. As the most distinguished historian of the period puts it, "He had gained her regard by his attentions, her esteem by his abilities; she perceived that no one else could surpass him in financial skill, and that the late King was scarcely mistaken when he said to her one day in chapel that 'Walpole could change stones into gold'"<sup>2</sup>—which last-named magical attribute was no small recommendation to the royal pair. Now, Sir Spencer Compton was all very well in his way, and had been one of her husband's chief favourites, as Prince of Wales; but his head was none of the strongest; and just at this very critical juncture, too, he committed an

<sup>1</sup> See quotation from Pulteney: "Answer to an Infamous Libel."—Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. II, p. 176 *n.*

<sup>2</sup> Mahon, vol. II, p. 177.



indiscretion which placed him in most unfavourable contrast to Sir Robert. When the question of Her Majesty's jointure came before the Parliament he could only venture to ask for her £60,000 a year, whereas Sir Robert offered to get her £100,000; and that decided her. Without openly opposing the King's resolution to have Sir Spencer, she set to work quietly to undermine it. She pointed out that the existing Ministry had been doing so very well that it would be a rash experiment to displace it; she also brought to his knowledge the little circumstance about Sir Spencer Compton having had to get that Declaration drawn up by Sir Robert, which the King had believed to be his own; but her last weapon was the surest to prevail, and that was that Sir Robert had agreed to get Parliament to sanction an increase of £130,000 to the Civil List. The King was profoundly impressed; and just then, Horace Walpole, Sir Robert's brother, arriving from Paris, informed His Majesty that foreign affairs were in such a state as to require most dexterous and experienced management. This made a change of ministers seem inexpedient even to the King himself; and when Compton, filled with distrust for his own powers, offered to relinquish his commission, the King took him at his word. The old ministers were reappointed, and Sir Robert's grip of the helm became stronger than ever. Henceforth the Queen leant upon his judgment, was guided by his advice; in fact, surrendered herself completely to his sagacity; and as, unknown to himself, Caroline's husband was equally dependent upon her, there is no exaggeration in the statement that "Sir Robert Walpole ruled the King through the Queen."

Such being the position of affairs, it obviously behoved all those adherents of the late Prince of Wales, who hoped to reap benefit from his accession to the Crown, to make a friend of the firmly-set Prime Minister; but to this very obvious necessity Lord Chesterfield appears to have shut

his eyes. Perhaps he considered that his own influence with, and claims upon, the Prince were strong enough to dispense with an adventitious support from one whom it had been almost a necessity of his position in the Prince's household to regard as an enemy. Nor were there wanting grounds for this impression. The Prince had, as we have seen, treated him as a friend upon whose advice in delicate contingencies he was accustomed to rely; and a continuous service of thirteen years as a lord of the bedchamber had certainly given him claims which could scarcely be ignored when it lay in the power of his royal master to requite them. A word of overture, the least sign of a wish to conciliate, would have gained for him the support of a minister who needed young recruits of his stamp, and who had it in his power to disarm the only formidable enemy who barred the young peer's road to distinction, the Queen; but Lord Chesterfield would not speak that word, nor make that sign, and had to take the consequences of his inflexibility. Sir Robert, recognizing in the budding statesman an opponent who might one day prove troublesome, and who was not to be won over, resolved to get rid of him at the first opportunity; and the Queen, whose influence over her husband had been greatly strengthened by these recent proofs of her sagacity to which allusion has been made, took care that her old scores contracted at Leicester House should be repaid with interest. Gradually, but surely, the King was inspired with distrust of his former favourite; and an unmistakable sign of this change of feeling was shown by the omission of the Earl's name from the list of promotions after the coronation. He simply retained his post as Lord of the Bedchamber, and was not even restored to his place of Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, from which he had been dismissed by the late monarch. This was all he more remarkable, as his friend and brother officer in the Prince's household, Lord Scarborough, was appointed

Master of the Horse and made a member of the Privy Council, though his political views had, to all appearance, undergone no change; a circumstance which disposes of the report that, by their own request, Lords Scarborough, Chesterfield, and Lonsdale were excepted from any mark of the royal favour.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, some warrant for believing that this harsh treatment of his old favourite was not altogether to the King's taste. According to Lord Hervey, he told Sir R. Walpole that he would like to have "something done for Chesterfield"; and then came the minister's looked-for opportunity. "Sir Robert, who did not dislike removing so declared an enemy to a little distance from the King's ear, proposed sending Lord Chesterfield as ambassador to Holland; and Lord Chesterfield, afraid to act against Sir Robert, and ashamed to act under him, gave in to this proposal, thinking it would allow people time to forget the declarations he had made of never forgiving Sir Robert, and save him from a little of that ridicule which the laughers of his acquaintance would be apt to lavish upon him when they saw him listed again under the banner of a man he had formerly deserted, and against whom he had so long fought with his wit, that only weapon with which he cared for fighting."<sup>2</sup> Although these are the words of an enemy, they are borne out by all we know of the circumstances. Both on his own private account, and as an intimate friend of the Queen, Lord Hervey detested Chesterfield.<sup>3</sup> It is remarkable that when Walpole's downfall was impending, Hervey, who kept aloof from him, courted the society of Chesterfield. Horace Walpole, writing in 1742, says: "He [Hervey] lives shut up with my Lord Chesterfield and Mr. Pulteney—a triumvirate

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 22 *n*.

<sup>2</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> It was a difference with Sir Robert Walpole that was said to have led to Lord Chesterfield's vacating his post as Captain of the Gentlemen or "Yeomen of the Guard" in 1725 (*v*. note to Hervey, vol. I, p. 98).

who hate one another more than anybody they could proscribe had they the power" (to Sir H. Mann, 7 January, 1842); but he was a good deal behind the scenes, saw the working of the springs of action, and learned from her Majesty's own lips what passed in those secret conferences between the King and his Prime Minister, at which she was commonly invited to assist. As regards the motives by which Lord Chesterfield was actuated on the occasion, his account is ill-naturedly speculative; but the rest of his statement may be taken as pretty fairly accurate. The fact of Lord Chesterfield having been for so many years a faithful and valued servant of George II leads to the presumption that the King must, on his accession, have been unwilling to exclude him altogether from the benefits showered upon his fellow-servants; whilst his old enmity to Sir Robert was so notorious, and his capacity for annoyance to those with whom he differed so obvious, that the reason alleged for the minister's wish to be rid of him are probable enough. On the other side we have, under Lord Chesterfield's own hand, sufficient proof that he was weary of inaction, whilst the consciousness that every avenue to power seemed closed to him at home, owing to the active opposition of the Queen and the Prime Minister, taken in connection with that perceptible loosing of the ties between himself and his royal master, which was due partly to their altered relations and partly to the growing influence of the Queen, would naturally have disposed him to accept a post dignified in itself, and for which his natural bent and early training adapted him. The Embassy at The Hague was at the time, next to that of France, the most important diplomatic office in the gift of the Crown, and attracted to its Court the most distinguished people of Europe. In addition, the temptation was held out that the appointment at The Hague was merely a temporary probation until the French

Embassy became vacant in a couple of years, when his transfer to the latter might be confidently anticipated; and there was also, probably, something in the reminiscence that it was during his visit to The Hague in early youth (1714) that he had acquired the passion for gaming which clung to him all through life. In a letter to his son, he observes: "When I first went to The Hague when gaming was much in fashion, I observed that many persons of shining rank and character gamed too. I was then young and silly enough to believe that gaming was one of the accomplishments, and as I aimed at perfection, I adopted gaming as a necessary step to it. Thus I acquired by error the habit of a vice which, far from adorning my character, has I am conscious been a great blemish to it." Whatsoever his motives for doing so may have been, he resolved to take the chance, and wisely, in most people's opinion. To a young man fond of power, disposed to finesse, and confident in his own ability to play the game of politics, it moreover offered great attractions, while its social advantages were even more to his taste than those presented by the French Court, which, as distinguished from the French nation, for some reason or other, he never seems to have estimated very highly.<sup>1</sup> He therefore did not hesitate to accept the post; and at once set about his preparations for departure. Of these the selection of his ambassadorial staff was the first. His brother, John Stanhope, was, at his recommendation, appointed Secretary to the Embassy; Mr. (afterwards Colonel) Rutter, his equerry; Dr. Boxholm, his physician; and the Reverend Richard Chevenix,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> His lordship's dislike of France peeps out frequently in his letters and his miscellaneous works—*vide*, e.g., his paper in the *World*. Maty, vol. II, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> It was this same Dr. Chevenix whom Lord Chesterfield insisted upon being appointed Bishop of Killaloe as a condition of his accepting the Viceroyalty of Ireland; and who during his viceroyalty was afterwards translated to the united Sees of Waterford and Lismore.

late private chaplain to his friend Lord Scarborough, was, from his knowledge of French, thought peculiarly fitted to administer to the Embassy's spiritual wants. All being settled, he quitted England without regret and arrived at The Hague in the middle of 1728, where almost his first step was the prudent one of engaging as his legal adviser one M. Vitriarius, whom he kept permanently at the Embassy to instruct him on all questions where a knowledge both of the Civil Law and the Imperial Code was necessary. So equipped, he settled down to his new career. For a young, untried man, without any official training, to be suddenly thrust into a position of such responsibility, was quite in accordance with usage. We then taught our youthful patricians statecraft by the Spartan method of teaching swimming, by flinging them into the deepest diplomatic waters and leaving them to take their chance. That, as in the present instance, they not only managed to keep afloat, but to become proficient, seems rather the result of good luck than of good management. But it must be owned that we have been exceptionally lucky upon the whole.

## IV

### DIPLOMACY

THE newly appointed ambassador entered upon his duties at The Hague in the early summer of 1728, when the assembly of the States-General were, like the other Powers of Europe, occupied with the subject of that Congress which the King of Spain had demanded should be held at Soissons for the purpose of reconsidering the preliminaries which had been signed in his name, but without his authority, at Vienna the year before.<sup>1</sup> To this Congress certain plenipotentiaries were deputed by the Powers as a matter of form ; but much of the negotiation was carried on, by a system of decentralization, elsewhere. The English ambassador at Paris, Lord Waldegrave, had his hands pretty full, and "at the Hague," as his descendant remarks, "our interests were most ably conducted by the Earl of Chesterfield, one of the most shining characters of the age ; whom Smollett the historian, though with much party spirit, goes so far as to call the only man of genius employed under Walpole."<sup>2</sup>

Lord Chesterfield had two admirable qualities at least ; he always recognized the fact of his own ignorance when it was forced upon him, and he was not above learning his business from those who were capable of teaching it. The fates had so ordered things that the Grand Pensionary, or principal officer entrusted with the management of state

<sup>1</sup> Smollett, vol. X, p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> Mahon's *Hist.*, vol. II, p. 189.

affairs when Holland happened to be without a Stadtholder, as was the case during his lordship's residence in Holland, was an old and experienced statesman, thoroughly capable of piloting a neophyte through the sinuosities of the republican constitution, and not unwilling to afford the ambassador both information and advice. The Earl frankly avows his obligations to this admirable mentor, with whom he lived on terms of the greatest intimacy. "Mr. Stingeland," said he, "was the ablest minister and the greatest man I ever knew. I may justly call him my friend, my master and my guide, for I was then quite new in business; he instructed me, he loved me, he trusted me." Surely the man who was capable of inspiring such affection and esteem, and of so heartily acknowledging the means to which he owed success, had something noble about him. Yet this was the man who was said to have been "incapable of making a friend."

To various other fortunate circumstances he owed much. His Majesty's Resident at The Hague, Mr. James Dayrolles, was a minister of very great experience, skill, and social influence, and these were placed at the new ambassador's service, who availed himself most fully of the Resident's advice until the death of the latter. From the ministers of foreign Courts, who were then at The Hague and who were for the most part men of eminence, well versed in diplomacy, he also learned much by observing their methods whilst engaged in counteracting their policy. "As the interests of their respective Courts were very different from those of Great Britain," justly observes his biographer,<sup>1</sup> "he was obliged to keep a watchful eye over them, to penetrate into their secrets while he concealed his own, and to oppose or prevent their plans and intrigues by supporting, at the same time, the almost irreconcilable characters of their personal friend and political adversary." It was just the rôle that suited him. The *suaviter in modo*,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Maty, vol. I, p. 101.



*fortiter in re*, which he afterwards so strongly recommended to his son, together with the *volto sciolto é pensieri stretti*, became rules as familiar to him as they were necessary. He conversed, without any apparent prejudice, with the heads of the opposite parties in Holland ; he directed his pursuits to a constant point of view, and carried them on without heat or affectation, but with firmness and perseverance. "He sometimes was best pleased when he appeared least so, and often concealed his difficulties under the mask of ease and indifference."<sup>1</sup> From his letters written home about this period, we obtain an inkling of how he divided his time between the calls of official and social duty. Writing to his friend Mrs. Howard (afterwards Lady Suffolk) a few weeks after his arrival in Holland, he says : "The people here, being convinced that I am determined to please them as much as I am able, are equally resolved in return to please me as much as possible, and I cannot express the civilities I have met with from all sorts of people. . . . My morning is entirely taken up with doing the King's business very ill, and my own still worse ; this lasts until I sit down to dinner with fourteen or fifteen people, when the conversation is cheerful enough. . . . The evening, which begins at five o'clock, is wholly sacred to pleasure. . . . This lasts till ten o'clock, at which time I come home, reflecting with satisfaction on the innocent amusements of a well-spent day that leave no sting behind them, and go to bed at eleven with the testimony of a good conscience. . . . I am very far from disliking this place ; I have business enough one part of the day to make me relish the amusements of the other part, and even to make them seem pleasures."<sup>2</sup> With all his liking for The Hague, he was not, however, unmindful of his interests at home. When too late, he had discovered the great mistake of his early life by which he

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Suffolk Correspondence*, 18 May, 1728.

had alienated the Queen, and attempted the impossible task of regaining the ground he had lost. Writing to the same friend (no happy selection of an intermediary, by the way), he solicits her good offices in prevailing upon Her Majesty to accept a china service "of a very particular sort," which he had lately purchased. Nothing could be more humble or deprecatory than the penitent sinner's advances: "As I know the Queen loves china," he says, "I fancy she would like these; but it would not become me to take the liberty of offering them to Her Majesty; but if you think she would like them, I must beg you will be so good as to take the whole affair upon yourself, and manage it so that I may not seem impertinent. Were they not mere baubles, I would not presume to offer them to Her Majesty at all; and as they are such, I am ashamed of doing it."<sup>1</sup> The Queen took the china, but did not alter her mind about the giver.<sup>2</sup> Nor was His Majesty forgotten by his faithful servant. In the same letter he announces that he is "at present over head and ears in mortar," building a room of fifty feet long and thirty-four broad, which was to be "handselled upon His Majesty's birthday next." Altogether a very prudent young ambassador, keenly alive to his master's and his own interests, faithfully and skilfully discharging the higher duties of his post, gracefully fulfilling its social obligations, and judiciously careful to be "all things to all men," though scarcely in the apostolic sense.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 August, 1728.

<sup>2</sup> It is rather amusing to note the manner in which the delicate negotiation was conducted. Mrs. Howard writes: "I have managed the china affair with the most consummate wisdom and prudence; and have received Her Majesty's commands to thank you and to tell you that she has but one scruple in taking of it, which is that it may look like a bribe for her favour." To which the Earl responds: "I am extremely sensible of the great honour the Queen does me in accepting of the china I took the liberty to offer. . . . Her Majesty need not apprehend being bribed by me; she is only to be bribed by merit—a bribe which it is not in my power to offer."—*Suffolk Correspondence*, vol. I, pp. 309-323.



THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD

*From the rare Irish mezzotint by an unknown artist, in the Collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.*



His new vocation was pleasant to a man of his temperament, who, though he affected to be "simply a man of pleasure," was in reality fond of work and desirous of pleasing others. "If anything can comfort one for the absence of those one loves or esteems, it is meeting with the goodwill of those one is obliged to be with, which very fortunately, though undeservedly, is my case."<sup>1</sup> A remarkable instance of his desire to conciliate those whose opinions might differ ever so widely from his own, is afforded by his account of an incident, by which, as he remarks, "I have acquired some degree of reputation." "You must know," he proceeds, "that last Sunday I treated the people here with an English christening in my chapel of a Black-a-moor boy that I have, having had him first instructed fully in the Christian faith by my chaplain, and examined by myself. The behaviour of the young Christian was decent and exemplary, and he renounced his *likeness* with great devotion, to the infinite edification of a very numerous audience of both sexes."<sup>2</sup> And then follows the inevitable mocking tag, "Though I have by these means got the reputation of a very good Christian, yet the more thrifty and frugal people here call my parts and economy a good deal in question for having put it out of my power ever to sell him." That he was an assiduous man of business is evident from the references we meet with in his correspondence with the Secretaries of State at home, and more especially from Lord Townshend's repeated tributes to his zeal and activity. His store of energy was inexhaustible. Before he left England it expended itself chiefly on society, but when he was given the chance of employing it more usefully, no man could devote himself with a keener zest to the work before him. We shall find this practice running all through his official life, wherever that life was spent, but it was at The Hague that he seems first to have discovered this necessity.

<sup>1</sup> To Mrs. Howard, 18 May, 1728.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 August, 1728.

"You know," he writes,<sup>1</sup> "I used to be accused in England (and I doubt pretty justly) of having a need for such a proportion of *talk* in the day; that is now changed into a need of such a proportion of *writing* in a day." His first occupation in the morning was to write his dispatches, trusting little or nothing to his secretary, a practice which he invariably followed in after life whenever he held office. Indeed, when in Ireland, he informed the young gentleman whom he appointed his *secretary* that his only duty would be to draw the salary of his appointment, as he himself would do the work. He seems to have prided himself, and justly, upon the skill with which his reports were composed, nay even to have created additional work; for when the question of starting a new East India Company at Altona under the protection of the King of Denmark was mooted, a memoir, which in conjunction with one of the deputies of the States he composed in defence of the rights of the United Provinces, had a great deal to do with the result, namely, that the Altona scheme shared the fate of the kindred Ostend project. Added to this industry and conscientiousness were certain natural and acquired qualities indispensable to a diplomatist—an almost intuitive power of judging character and penetrating motives, combined with an address that disarmed suspicion while it baffled curiosity. His very amusements furnished him with opportunities, which he turned to account, of observing character, eliciting information, and conveying impressions, so that, while his avowed ambition was to be considered a man of pleasure, he was none the less as keen a man of business as had ever represented England at The Hague. Indeed, there was a strong impression amongst those who had the best opportunity of judging, that his powers might have been more usefully employed at the French Embassy, where a strong man was especially needed, and for which he had at one time been designated.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

The social amusements to which his lordship refers do not appear to have been of a very entrancing kind. After dinner, a promenade in the public walk called the Voorhout (which he spells "Forault"); then either a very bad French play, or a *reprise* at quadrille with three ladies, the youngest upwards of fifty, at which it was possible, with bad luck, to lose so much as three florins; occasionally a game of blind-man's-buff, or music in the *wood*, or little parties out of town. Balls were attempted now and then, but with moderate success—"the ladies there being a little apt to quarrel with one another; insomuch that, before you can dance down three couple, it is highly probable that two of them are sat down in a huff." A remarkable exception to the commonplace character of these entertainments were the birthday celebrations given by the Ambassador in honour of his Sovereign. For these he had, as we have seen, enlarged the Embassy by adding a spacious apartment, and the splendour of his hospitality on these auspicious occasions was noised all over Europe. Such loyalty deserved to be rewarded, as the Earl himself was fully aware; for we find him writing to Lord Townshend, Secretary of State, soliciting that nobleman's good offices for the purpose. "By the death of the Duke of York," he writes, "there are now two Garters vacant that probably will not long remain so; and your lordship knows, by the former applications I have troubled you with on that score, how desirous and ambitious I am of that honour. Your lordship knows, too, that though it is at all times a mark of honour and of His Majesty's favour, yet it can never be of so much (or, indeed, of any real) use to me as now that I have the honour to be in the situation I am in. . . . It may possibly be owning a great weakness when I confess to your lordship that I would rather have this one mark of His Majesty's and your favour than any one other thing that your lordship can recommend me to, or the King dispose of."<sup>1</sup> From which two things are clear—

first, that when Lord Chesterfield had any mind to a thing he could be earnest enough in asking for it; and secondly, that to represent, as has sometimes been the case, that he merely "accepted" the Garter as his just due, is putting the matter rather strongly. His earnest solicitations on this head were not, however, crowned with immediate success; nor was it to his friend, Townshend, but to one whom he regarded as his enemy, that he was eventually indebted for the honour. The other Garter was spoken of for the Prince of Orange; and in reporting a conversation which he had with his friend the Pensionary and another,<sup>2</sup> upon this subject, Lord Chesterfield assumes a more dignified attitude. "I hope your lordship will do me the justice to believe," he says, "that I have no view of my own in submitting these considerations to your judgment. I shall neither have the Garter the more nor the less, the sooner nor the later, for the Prince of Orange's having it or not." But in the same letter he takes care to press his own interests as regarded another matter. "If," he goes on to say, "when the match shall be agreed upon between Prince Frederick and the Princess Royal of Prussia, an Ambassador is to be sent to Berlin upon that extraordinary occasion, I beg that your lordship will be so good as to recommend me to His Majesty's consideration upon that account"; though we must do him the justice to say that this latter request was not prompted by any baser motive than ambition, for he adds: "For which I ask no extraordinary nor additional allowance; so that it will be a considerable saving for the King"—an argument, by the way, which that frugal monarch was very likely to appreciate.

If in angling thus promiscuously he did not succeed

<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 684. Letter of 31 August, 1728.

<sup>2</sup> M. de Sinden, who strongly disapproved of the Prince's having the Garter "till other things (notably the projected match with the Princess Royal of England) were ready to go along with it."



in landing the particular fish he wanted most, the Earl managed to catch something ; as we find him expressing, in a subsequent letter to Lord Townshend, his earnest thanks for being employed to conduct the overtures for the projected marriage, above referred to, between the Princess Royal and the Prince of Orange. It was not by any means an easy task upon which he was thus deputed to enter, as the Grand Pensionary was extremely opposed to the match, while the disposition of the English Court was altogether dependent upon the Prince of Orange being appointed Stadtholder of the Province of Holland ; as to which there was considerable uncertainty, there being a party in the General Assembly of the States strongly antagonistic to the Prince's claims. The Ambassador's task was to enlist the combined support of the Pensionary and the Greffier;<sup>1</sup> and his friend, M. de Sinden, informed him that there was a plan to have the Prince first chosen Stadtholder of another province (Zealand), which would, by giving him a majority of the seven provinces, facilitate his election for Holland ; but that the whole depended upon the secrecy with which the matter was conducted, "and upon a little money being properly distributed." This last particular Lord Chesterfield thought might be managed "with some assistance from England," though he made no actual promise. The worst feature in the case was that the powerful city of Amsterdam, and the chief burgomasters of the other towns, who had been making a very good thing by their oppressions and extortions under the existing regime, disliked the appointment of a Stadtholder who might prove troublesomely inquisitive ; and declared that if there were any steps taken to bring about the appointment in question, they would immediately declare the

<sup>1</sup> An officer corresponding to our own Secretary of State. The Greffier at this time was one M. Fagel, who, said Lord Chesterfield, "had the deepest knowledge of business, and the soundest judgment of any man I ever knew in my life."

Prince of Nassau-Seigen Stadtholder. Lord Chesterfield's opinion was that it would be better for the English Government not to say anything to the Pensionary, or Greffier, about the match being conditional on the Prince of Orange's appointment, but to announce it "as a thing determined," as they would be less offended if it were done without, than against, their consent; and above all, that there should be no communication to the Greffier apart from the Pensionary (as had been enjoined), for the latter would be sure to take offence. The wisdom of this advice commended itself to the parties at home, who were anxious that the match should come off; for, in his reply, Lord Townshend says that he had laid it before the King, "who read it with great attention and approbation, and has commanded me to let you know that, for the reasons you give, he entirely approves of your conduct in not communicating to the Greffier what you had order to say to him." There is no doubt that his lordship's prudence averted the failure of the negotiation; for, as he pointed out, the Greffier would be sure to tell the Pensionary everything communicated to him, and the latter, who was already averse to the match, would have been still more alienated by what he would naturally regard as a personal slight to himself.

This was of itself a distinct success for a new hand to achieve, and strengthened his position so far as the remainder of the negotiation was concerned. His advice as to a judicious distribution of money was not neglected, and as a consequence, the name of the rival candidate, the Prince of Nassau-Seigen, sank into oblivion. The Prince of Orange came to The Hague, where he was most favourably received—"the acclamations of the people being loud and universal." Previous to his coming, however, there was some trouble with the Pensionary, who desired that the Prince's visit might be postponed. Lord Chesterfield seemingly acquiesced, as he thought it necessary, he said,

"to please the Pensionary as much as possible,<sup>1</sup> and to soften him at least (if he was not to be gained) by all imaginable deference to his opinion"; but all the same, he carried his point, and what is more surprising, the Pensionary was "not only satisfied but pleased." Another instance of his dexterous vigilance was a warning conveyed to Lord Townshend to be on his guard against Lady Portland, governess to the daughter of George II. "I must on this occasion,"<sup>2</sup> writes the Ambassador, "take the liberty of suggesting to your lordship that although I am thoroughly convinced of Lady Portland's zeal and attachment for the Princess Royal, and of her good intentions for the Prince of Orange; yet her strict intimacy with Count Obdam and his family, from whom I am persuaded she conceals nothing, makes her a very improper person to be talked to on that subject." The marriage of which the preliminaries had given rise to such delicate finesse was not fated to come off for a long time yet;<sup>3</sup> but had it not been for the dexterous management of these preliminaries by the young Ambassador, it is very doubtful that it would have come off at all. Nor was he less energetic in discharging the minor duties of his representative office. Every scrap of intelligence that in any way bore upon the public or private interests of his country was diligently collected and transmitted to the Home Government. Nothing seemed to escape him; now, it is some mysterious correspondence about Gibraltar, "obtained from a poor man who made his living by copying letters"; now a confidential report that "the Prussian Agent in London writes very impertinent and malicious accounts to his own Court of that of England"; now, a representation on behalf of the son of an Irish bishop "who had the misfortune about a year ago to kill his own servant," and had fled to

<sup>1</sup> Letter to George Tilson, Esq., Under-Secretary of State, 29 July, 1729.

<sup>2</sup> *v. Carlyle's Frederick the Great*, vol. II, pp. 55 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> It did not take place until 1734.

Holland to escape the consequences ; now, an intimation that one, Monsieur Pollnitz, who had written a most scandalous book, entitled *L'Histoire de Cunegarde*, and "which contains the whole life and history of his present Majesty's mother," was on his way to England with a design of publishing it there ; "so that if you could find him out, it would not be amiss to seize his papers, amongst which you would probably get the only copy he has left of it" ; now, the doleful news that "the King of Prussia had beaten the Princess Royal his daughter most unmercifully—dragged her about the room by the hair, kicking her in the belly and breast till her cries alarmed the officer of the Guard, who came in. She keeps her bed of the bruises she received,"—a piece of intelligence likely just then to interest those concerned in the "double marriage" project.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances : enough has been said to prove that, in Lord Chesterfield, England possessed a representative who vigilantly guarded her interests and who, though he might be a voluptuary, did not allow his pleasures to interfere with his duties, whilst sustaining the social credit of his high office with a splendour that disdained the thought of saving. "I assure you," he writes to Mrs. Howard,<sup>1</sup> "you need not be alarmed at what Lord Albemarle and Mrs. Macartney are pleased to call my magnificence ; for it is nothing like it, and only what is barely necessary ; and as for the expense, I should be very sorry to be a gainer by this or any other employment that the King may ever think fit to give me. Whatever my actions may be, interest shall never be thought to influence them ; and if I can procure any credit for my master or myself at the expense, not only of what he allows me, but even of my own, I shall think it very well bestowed." Probably the writer was not without some hope that the substance of this letter would be communicated to His Majesty, with results that might prove beneficial to him-

<sup>1</sup> *Suffolk Correspondence.* Letter of 26 July, 1729.

self; but in any case, the letter contained nothing but what was strictly true, and if reward was sought, no one could deny that it had been amply earned by the skill, vigilance, success, and splendour with which the Ambassador represented his sovereign. There was not much credit to be got out of the Soissons business, but Lord Chesterfield helped in it as well as he could, and if the Congress ended in a *fiasco*, it was probably because he had not a more active share in it; for his power of managing men and reconciling differences of opinion was, even now, scarcely less remarkable than that of his great contemporary, Marlborough. Among foreign statesmen he bore the reputation of a *bon homme*,<sup>1</sup> which, though an unflattering and, in his case, a most inadequate description, is about the most useful character that a negotiator can possess, as it disarms suspicion. Whether his services were employed in connection with the new conferences at Seville between the Plenipotentiaries of England, France, and Spain, there is nothing to show, nor was there much credit to be gained from assisting in the treaty which resulted, and which was as gross an infraction of national rights as "The Preliminaries of Vienna" were of those of Spain. However, it secured the Earldom of Harrington for William Stanhope, who concluded it, whose diplomatic skill and thorough popularity with the Spanish sovereign and nation rendered him almost independent of assistance.<sup>2</sup> Still, the fact that Holland subsequently acceded to the Treaty of Seville is presumptive evidence that Lord Chesterfield had not been remitting in his advocacy of the measure accomplished by his relative. Meanwhile he did not remit his own endeavours to soften the Queen's resentment by messages conveyed through channels whence they were likely to reach her. Thus we find him writing to Tilson, the Under-Secretary:

<sup>1</sup> Note to Gramkow, quoted in Carlyle's *Frederick*, vol. II, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> Of whom the King of Spain used to say, "Stanhope is the only foreign minister who never deceived me."

“I am extremely glad to hear of Her Majesty’s perfect recovery; her lingering so long having given me great uneasiness,” and he entreats permission to throw himself at the King’s feet when the latter should next visit Hanover, though averring that “he could by no means solicit that, at the expense of neglecting his duty to His Majesty at the Hague.” And indeed there was no lack of business to occupy him at The Hague. Great Britain, France, and the United Provinces were just then engaged in trying to maintain the peace of Europe, which was sorely imperilled by the chafing discontents of Austria and Spain, who, united by their real or fancied wrongs, had entered into an alliance for the purpose of being revenged on those who had accomplished their discomfiture. The Emperor of Austria being infuriated with King George for personal reasons, not only threatened Hanover, but, in defiance of representations from the United Provinces, was attempting to establish a rival East India Company at Ostend, whilst the King of Spain was intent upon regaining possession of Gibraltar, either by policy or force, and was much nearer gaining his point than is generally supposed. Much of the secret information bearing upon these questions trickled through The Hague, and it was the Ambassador’s task to collect and sift it; to keep Dutch sympathy on the side of England, and not only to advise his own Government of the course of events, but in a measure to direct its policy. Lord Townshend found him invaluable, and at length began to think that were so capable a statesman, who was bound to him by friendship and consanguinity, taken into the Ministry, not only would the latter be greatly strengthened, but the balance of power between himself and Walpole adjusted. As matters existed, the relations between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State were unsatisfactory, at least to the latter. Walpole was domineering, and having the King, the Queen, and most of the country just then on his side, towered above all his

compeers. Townshend, who was ambitious and hot-tempered, resented this; but felt that he could not hold his own against Walpole without assistance. So long as Lady Townshend (who was a sister of Walpole's) lived the possibility of an open breach was avoided, owing mainly to that lady's influence with the Queen; but after her death a growing coldness between the brothers-in-law became apparent. They differed on questions of foreign policy, and it was Walpole who had his way. Lord Townshend might have hoped for better success in matters of home administration if properly backed up by those members of the Cabinet who shared his views; but the only influential rival to Walpole was the Duke of Newcastle, whom he found so timid and captious as to be of no use. The idea then occurred to him that if the Duke were got rid of and his place supplied by some bolder spirit, Walpole might be held in check; and that as his friend and relation, Chesterfield, was anxious to return to England,<sup>1</sup> it would be a very good thing to have him appointed in the Duke's place. Walpole, however, being satisfied with existing arrangements, did not view the matter in the same light, whereupon Townshend tried to effect his object by stratagem. He recommended Lord Chesterfield to seize the opportunity presented by the King's annual visit to the Continent, when it would be part of his duty to wait upon His Majesty at Helvoetsluys, to ask permission to attend the King to London on account of private business, hoping that his lordship would make himself so agreeable during the journey as to win the royal support in favour of the proposed change of ministers. Events did not, however, shape themselves in accordance with Lord Townshend's plan. The Ambassador was indeed most graciously received by His Majesty, who thanked him for his services and granted his request.<sup>2</sup> But Walpole had yet to be

<sup>1</sup> Lord Chesterfield to Lord Townshend (7 October, 1729).—Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 704.

<sup>2</sup> Montesquieu accompanied them on this journey.

reckoned with ; and it turned out that he was perfectly aware of the Townshend scheme, which he had both the will and the power to thwart. Lord Chesterfield having made his first appearance at Court on his return to London (24 October, 1729), Sir Robert took him aside, and without further preface asked if he had come to be Secretary of State. His lordship declared he had no ambition of the kind ; but that he would not object to a place of more ease, and that he especially wanted the Garter, not as a reward for his services, but in virtue of His Majesty's promise made when Prince of Wales. "I am a man of pleasure," he remarked, "and the blue ribband would add two inches to my stature." "Then I see how it is," said the Minister, "it is Townshend's intrigue, in which you have no share ; but it will be fruitless ; you cannot be Secretary of State ; nor shall you be beholden for the gratification of your wishes to anybody but myself."<sup>1</sup> And so it proved. Instead of displacing the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Townshend himself was forced to resign, whereupon Lord Harrington took his place as Secretary of State, and when the Garter *did* come to Lord Chesterfield, it was virtually as the gift of Walpole.

Meanwhile the Ambassador found plenty to occupy him at The Hague. There were the negotiations relating to the well-known "double marriage" project, by which it was proposed to effect a marriage between the Prince of Wales and the daughter of the King of Prussia on the one hand, and between the Prince Royal of Prussia and the second daughter of George II on the other. The queens of the respective countries were much bent on these alliances ; not so the respective royal fathers. King George insisted on both or none ; King Frederick on one or neither. He was willing that his son should marry the English princess, if King George did not insist on the double event. As both kings cordially hated each other,

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 112, 13 n.



neither was disposed to give way, and the negotiations fell through.<sup>1</sup> It is not to be supposed that Lord Chesterfield had any share in them beyond transmitting from time to time to the Home Government any cognate intelligence that reached him during their progress ; but in his absence an event occurred which brought his Embassy into close connection with their sequel. One Lieutenant Keith, who was involved in the contemplated flight of the Crown Prince of Prussia<sup>2</sup> from the dominions of his august father, had, upon the discovery of that ill-fated project, managed to effect his own escape, thanks to a timely warning from the unhappy prince, and made straight for The Hague. There he sought an asylum in the English Ambassador's house, which happened to be just then untenanted by its noble owner, who, as we have seen, had previously been permitted to visit England on private affairs. Lord Chesterfield's German secretary was, however, still residing at the Embassy, and received the fugitive, who lay concealed there for some days, whilst Colonel Dumoulin, whom the King of Prussia had commanded to go instantly upon the track of Keith, and follow him till found and caught, dead or alive, was moving heaven and earth to get at him. Whether the inviolability of the Ambassador's house would have been respected by the gallant colonel is very doubtful, were it not that the Grand Pensionary, hearing that violent measures were contemplated, sent for Dumoulin, and informed him that any attempt to infringe ambassadorial privileges by making an arrest there would be visited with the utmost rigour of the law, whereupon the disgusted officer was fain to content himself with prowling about the vicinity in the hope of intercepting Keith on his way to the coast. But in spite of all his vigilance, the secretary managed to convey Keith to Scheveningen, and thence, by means of a chance fishing-

<sup>1</sup> These are fully described in Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, vol. II, Book V.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

boat, to England. How he might have fared if his arrest had been effected is pretty evident from what followed. Frederick William had him cited, by tap of drum, and in native and Dutch gazettes, to appear at Wesel by a certain date; then, as he failed to do so, his quartered effigy was nailed upon a gallows there, and all his property confiscated.<sup>1</sup> We do not find any allusion in the Chesterfield correspondence to a circumstance which might be supposed to have considerable interest for an ambassador whose privileges were threatened; from which we may conclude that the Earl was not well pleased at being absent from his post on an occasion of so much interest. What line he would have taken had he been on the spot is only matter of conjecture; but he would probably have so acted as to turn the eyes of Europe upon his own individuality, and the mere fact of an ambassador being the subject of so daring an attempt would have given him a prominence which he was the last man in the world to despise.

There was yet another matter growing out of the bad feeling between the two sovereigns, which had given him an opportunity of displaying that diplomatic skill which he was now generally acknowledged to possess. Everybody knows that his then Majesty of Prussia's craze for kidnapping tall fellows, as recruits for his regiment of guards, was exercised with small regard to international obligations. Prussian emissaries had penetrated into Hanover and carried off many of King George's subjects for this purpose; and as the English monarch was particularly sensitive to whatever affected his Electoral dominions, there were not only angry remonstrances but reprisals in kind which exasperated his Prussian Majesty almost beyond endurance. Further, the Hanoverians had actually cut the hay upon certain border-land the right to which was a matter of dispute between the two

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, vol. II, p. 198.

sovereigns, and this proved to be more than the irate Frederick William could bear. He resolved that nothing but blood should wipe out the insult; but, properly enough, reflected, "Why should human blood, except George's and mine, be shed in such a quarrel?" and forthwith resolved to dispatch a cartel to his brother of England, proposing that they should meet, with their seconds, at Hildesheim, and settle their differences in the way usual between private gentlemen. King George was nothing loath; indeed the English version of the story was that the suggestion proceeded in the first instance from him;<sup>1</sup> but of course the affair could not be permitted to go on. Borck on one side, and Lord Townshend on the other, remonstrated and implored, with success, to prevent the scandal; and eventually the King of Prussia was induced to modify his plan by substituting for the *duello* a projected invasion of Hanover. Had he carried out this project there is little doubt that King George would have had the worst of it. The Prussian army of invasion was formidable in point of numbers, equipment, and discipline; whilst Hanover was in no position to defend itself, and must have succumbed before assistance arrived from England. Fortunately, Lord Chesterfield was able to avert the collision by his influence with the Dutch Government. He represented to them the consequences which might arise from the projected invasion in such a manner that the States dispatched a letter to the King of Prussia entreating him to suspend hostilities, and proposing arbitration on the various points in dispute between the incensed monarchs. To give effect to this remonstrance, several Dutch regiments were mobilized, with orders to march on Cleves; and the whole attitude of the United Provinces was so decided that Frederick William reconsidered his plan. He accepted the proposed arbitration, which resulted in a settlement that averted war between the parties, if

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 127.

it did not make them friends. Lord Chesterfield's share in this happy result was handsomely acknowledged by the then Secretary of State (Lord Townshend), and led to his being kept longer at The Hague than was originally intended. "Your conduct, your activity, your zeal, your ability in performing the King's commands," writes the Secretary, "gave his Majesty the utmost satisfaction ; and I congratulate your Excellency, not only on your success, but on this opportunity of showing his Majesty of how much importance it has been to his service to have had so dexterous, vigilant, and zealous a minister as yourself at the Hague in this critical conjuncture."<sup>1</sup> Higher praise could not be bestowed ; and when we bear in mind that its recipient was, comparatively speaking, a neophyte in diplomacy, its significance is all the greater.

If Lord Chesterfield really suffered a defeat in the object of his visit to England, he at least accomplished another triumph upon which we know his heart was bent—the distinction of the Garter. On 18 June, 1730, the Duke of Cumberland and he were installed as Knights of the Order at Windsor, the expenses of the ceremony being defrayed by the King. For this act of royal favour he was, as we have seen, indebted to Walpole, who added yet another proof that he was well prepared to reward adhesion. The office of Lord Steward to His Majesty's Household had become vacant, owing to the Duke of Dorset being made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. It was offered to Lord Carteret, who had just retired from the post which the Duke was about to fill, but declined by him ; and therefore was given to Lord Chesterfield, who in accepting it, says Hervey,<sup>2</sup> "made the warmest profession to Sir Robert Walpole that it was possible to utter, acknowledging that his attachment this winter to Lord Townshend gave him no right to expect this favour ; and he concluded by saying, ' I had lost the game, but you have taken my cards in your hand and

<sup>1</sup> Lord Townshend's letter of 6 September, 1729.    <sup>2</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 143.

recovered it.'” If his gratitude was but short-lived, like his tenure of office, some credit is due to him for setting his face steadily against the prevailing system of corruption so far as concerned the minor appointments now at his disposal. One of his predecessors, who was suspected to have made some pecuniary advantage out of the places in his department, gave him a list of the persons he had put in, and desired they might be continued. The answer was: “I have at present no thoughts of turning any one out; but if I alter my mind, it will only be in relation to those who have bought”; and although at first he gave away two or three places at the recommendation of the royal family, he afterwards declined to continue that practice.<sup>1</sup> In fact, during his whole life he is almost singular among the public men of his time in the impartiality and absolute freedom from corruption with which he dispensed such patronage as fell to his share. Absolute impartiality is hardly to be expected from human nature; and to the claims of friendship, or esteem, he may, in some few instances, have allowed more than their due weight; but he never seems to have appointed any person to an office for which that person was obviously unfitted, and his worst enemies never charged him with selling preferment or purchasing it for himself—no small praise in an age when corruption was the rule, not the exception. That he now had, or thought himself to have, much influence at Court is evident from his telling Mr. James Dayrolles, his old friend at The Hague, that it had been his intention to procure a diplomatic post outside his own Embassy for that gentleman’s nephew: “J’avoir pensé a cette heure de la faire Secretaire de l’Ambassade à Paris sous My lord Waldegrave, qui est destiné a cette commission; mais malheureusement le Duc de Newcastle avoit justement obtenu du roi cet emploi pour son parent.”<sup>2</sup> At any rate,

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 113 n.

<sup>2</sup> 5 June (O.S.), 1730. Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 705.

Walpole, who was not sufficiently sure of him to desire that such influence should grow, began to be of opinion that, all things considered, the ambassador should return to his post; and shortly after his installation he set out for The Hague,<sup>1</sup> where he soon found sufficient to occupy him. The Emperor of Austria was angry that the Treaty of Seville had been concluded, and the King of Spain equally so because the said Treaty had not been executed. France, now siding with Spain, on account of the interests at stake since the birth of the Dauphin (in 1729), was framing new schemes against the house of Austria; and Spain was incensed against the maritime powers for delaying the promised conveyance of the Infant into Italy. The French Ambassador at The Hague was pressing the States to fulfil their engagements to Spain, engagements which the Spanish Ambassador at Paris openly declared to have been violated. The course which both demanded would have entailed the necessity of hostilities between Austria and the maritime powers; and to this England and the States were strongly opposed, as they had no wish to destroy the only barrier against the aggression of the Bourbons. They consequently preferred to disarm the opposition of Austria to the Treaty of Seville by offering the Emperor an equivalent for the sacrifices which the carrying out of that treaty would have entailed upon him, by promoting another object upon which his heart was known to be set. Having no male heir, it was his earnest desire that his heirs-female might be capable of succeeding to his hereditary dominions; and an arrangement for that purpose called the *Pragmatic Sanction* had actually been submitted to the consideration of the Congress of Soissons, when it was practically rejected by the French, and coldly received by the British representatives. In existing cir-

<sup>1</sup> During his stay in England he assisted at a Council held to consider a report on the trial and condemnation of the notorious Colonel Charteris for an infamous offence.—Maty, vol. I, p. 114 n.

cumstances, however, the Pragmatic Sanction, as affording a possible means of averting the threatened rupture, once more engaged the attention of the English Cabinet. If by assenting to it the Emperor's consent to the Treaty of Seville, not to mention the abolition of that pernicious Ostend Company scheme, could be purchased, why should his natural desire for a direct lineal succession be thwarted? A secret negotiation was accordingly set on foot between the British Ambassador at The Hague, the Imperial Envoy Count Finzendorf, his particular friend, and the Grand Pensionary of Holland.<sup>1</sup> That Lord Chesterfield's share in these negotiations entailed upon him much care and trouble is evident from his frequent letters to the Secretary of State (Lord Harrington) at this period.<sup>2</sup> He confesses to have some doubts about the success of "Our Vienna treaty," his uncertainty being based upon the haughtiness and obstinacy of the Emperor, combined with the latter's knowledge of the distrusts and jealousy among the allies; and he takes leave to point out rather frankly that the King's solicitude about Hanover is both unreasonable and injudicious. "I cannot comprehend," he says, "what can be meant by one additional security of the King's Electoral dominions, which are already guaranteed over and over again by all the powers upon earth, and by the whole Empire, as being part of it; so that I suspect additional security to mean additional dominion." His difficulties with the sullen United Provinces were, also, so threatening that there was a possibility at one time of his being recalled; whilst the delays interposed both by them and by the Court of Vienna were trying to a degree. "If the treaty comes back signed," he writes, "to be sure I will stay here till I have got the Republic into it." But supposing the answer should be doubtful and dilatory, as there was every reason to suspect, he begs for instructions as to whether he should deliver his letter of revocation or

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Bradshaw, vol. II, pp. 711 *et seq.*

not; and he asks the Secretary to advise him, both as a minister and as a friend.

When Lord Chesterfield left England after receiving the Garter, it was on an understanding, sanctioned by the King, that he should return, as he phrases it, "for good and all," in time for the meeting of Parliament; and this, having in some way leaked out, was distorted by rumour into a suspicion that he was about to be recalled against his own will, owing to the animosity of the brothers Walpole. This was especially annoying to the Ambassador, both from the prospect of his return being generally known at The Hague, and also because he feared lest the King, on such a report reaching his ears, should take offence at the Ambassador having represented as a grievance that which he had actually solicited as a favour. Further, he was very unwilling that the impression that he regarded Sir Robert Walpole in any other light than as a friend should gain ground, while he had some reason to suppose that the report in question had produced that impression upon the Minister. Meanwhile, the negotiations at Vienna were protracted to a distressing length, chiefly, as he believed, owing to the stipulations concerning Hanover; and he apprehended that, should the States become aware that this was the only stumbling-block in the way of a treaty, they would conclude a separate peace on their own account. It was hard for him to lay stress on this point without incurring the risk of offending His Majesty, with whom Hanover was always the first consideration; so that altogether his position was a very difficult one. "If at last I could come back with an olive branch!"<sup>1</sup> he prays devoutly, at the same time expressing a fear that this consummation would be long delayed. Then came a declaration from the Spanish Ambassador<sup>2</sup> at Paris that the King, his master, considered himself free from all the engagements contracted

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Lord Harrington, 2 January, 1731.

<sup>2</sup> Marquis de Castelar.



at Seville, which led the Court of Vienna to expect the utmost confusion among the allies; and this, combined with the death of the Duke of Parma, did not dispose them to hasten their compliance, for by his will the Duke commended his unborn child to the protection of the allied powers, entreating them to defer the execution of their projects until his consort should be delivered. There was a further provision in the will that, if the child should be still-born or die, the duchies of Parma and Placentia should devolve to the Infant Don Carlos of Spain, as agreed by the Treaty of Seville; and, under the pretence of guaranteeing Don Carlos's interests, the imperial troops at once seized upon the duchies in question. There was now every prospect of a terrible war, but this was happily averted by Great Britain and the States-General making such urgent representations to the Emperor that he consented to withdraw his troops from Parma and Placentia, leaving the King of Spain to take possession of these duchies on behalf of Don Carlos. The great obstacle all through was, as Lord Chesterfield frequently pointed out, the King's insistence upon the articles regarding Hanover. Our Ambassador had tried to keep this matter in the background as much as possible; but when Count Finzendorf, the Imperial Envoy, was informed by Mr. Robinson, unless *tous les points allemands* be settled to His Majesty's entire satisfaction, everything else *doit être censé nul*, he betrayed his annoyance. "You have kept the most material point a secret from me," he reproached Lord Chesterfield, "and never told me that this whole affair turns upon the King's electoral demands, which are such as it is not in the Emperor's power to comply with." However, by the dexterity of the Ambassador, his indignation was assuaged, and what was known as the "Second Treaty of Vienna"<sup>1</sup> was actually signed on 16 March, 1731, though, strange to

<sup>1</sup> To distinguish it from that concluded in 1725.

say, the Dutch Minister was not one of the signatories.<sup>1</sup> This was partly owing to constitutional difficulties and partly to dissatisfaction, which was natural enough, considering the way in which Dutch interests had been ignored; but, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Lord Chesterfield, this difficulty also was surmounted, and the States-General were, by a separate article, expressly named as a principal contracting party.

In addition to the withdrawal of the Imperial forces from the duchies, and their subsequent occupation by Spain on behalf of Don Carlos, the new treaty provided for the maintenance of the Emperor's scheme of succession in conformity with the Pragmatic Sanction; for the dissolution of the Ostend Company, and the stoppage of all trading to the East Indies from the Austrian Netherlands. The French made no secret of their dissatisfaction, but refrained from active opposition. The difficulties with which Lord Chesterfield had to contend in bringing the scheme about were enormous. "I find," he humorously says, writing to a friend, "treating with about two hundred sovereigns of different tempers and professions is as laborious as treating with one fine woman who is, at least, of two hundred minds in one day."<sup>2</sup> In addition to those labours, the chief responsibility for the delicate negotiations with reference to the projected marriage of the Prince of Orange and the Princess Anne of England devolved upon him; and, as he pointed out, it was impossible for anybody not very well acquainted with the Dutch form of government to have a notion of the strange delays and absurd difficulties which embarrassed him at every step: of which he gives an illustration by no means flattering to English public morality at the time. Writing to the

<sup>1</sup> It was in reality concluded between Lord Chesterfield, the Pensionary, and Count Finzendorf.

<sup>2</sup> To Dr. Arbuthnot, quoted in Mahon's *History of England*, vol. II, p. 255.

Under-Secretary of State (Mr. Tilson), he says :—" To give you some image of it, represent to yourself an English Minister endeavouring to carry a point by the single merit of the point itself, without the assistance of rewards and punishments, through what our patriots would call an independent and unbiassed House of Commons. . . . For my own part, if I could teach anybody the Christian virtues of patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, I would send them to negotiate a treaty here."<sup>1</sup> But he had his compensations, of which the most innocent were the opportunities which he thus found to become acquainted with many of the most distinguished men in Europe. For instance, when the Duke of Lorraine, the intended husband of the eldest daughter of the Emperor of Austria, and afterwards Emperor himself, passed through Holland, he treated Lord Chesterfield with exceptional marks of distinction and friendship, chiefly no doubt in acknowledgment of the manner in which the Ambassador had championed Austrian interests while the Second Treaty of Vienna was being negotiated. Their intercourse was marked by a freedom very unusual in such cases; and which was carried so far that the Duke chose to make a freemason of Lord Chesterfield in a small "lodge" specially convened for the occasion. The contemporary French Ambassador at The Hague, too, was the Marquis of Fenelon, a relative of the author of *Telemachus*—a person of very great distinction; also the celebrated Abbé Strickland, who had laboured hard, when in England, to persuade his co-religionists to take the oath of allegiance to the King—whereby they might have secured the abolition of the Test Act and other oppressive laws—shared his coterie; and Montesquieu, Voltaire, etc., were among his friends and correspondents. Life was passed in a round of entertainments of which the English Embassy was the stirring centre; and as magnificence is always popular, the

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Tilson.—Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 724.

Ambassador had no reason to complain that his hospitality was unappreciated.

So far Lord Chesterfield's record had been distinctly creditable, and had his social recreations been confined to friendships of this nature, his lordship's character might stand higher ; though, with that curious blending of good and evil fortune which attended him all through, his faults and vices have aided in procuring him such immortality as he enjoys. We have seen that he avowedly aimed at being considered "a man of pleasure," and what that signified at the time in which he flourished is no secret to those who have studied the social history of the eighteenth century. Suffice it to say that few aspired to the title who did not more or less outrage the ordinary canons of decency and morality, especially in matters relating to the commerce of the sexes. From his youth up Chesterfield had practised this form of licence, and had even affected to be a more daring and successful sinner in that respect than he had any actual claim to be. The whole Court, from the King downwards, laughed at his pretensions to be a vanquisher of the sex, and there was no form of flattery in which his soul more delighted than the reproaches levelled at him as an inevitable foe to domestic peace. "He affected following many women of the first beauty and the most in fashion," says Hervey, "and if you would have taken his word for it, not without success ; whilst in fact and in truth he never gained any one above the venal rank of those whom an Adonis or a Vulcan might be equally well with, for an equal sum of money."<sup>1</sup> And the same acrid chronicler tells us that George II once said : "Chesterfield is a little tea-table scoundrel that tells little womanish lies to make quarrels in families ; and tries to make women lose their reputations, and make their husbands beat them, without any object but to give himself airs ; as if any one could believe a woman could like a dwarf baboon."<sup>2</sup> He like-

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 162.



JOHN, LORD HERVEY

*From a bust in the possession of the Marquis of Bristol*



wise avers what it is to be feared was only too true, that Lord Chesterfield "would not scruple to own that he thought the laws of honour in men, and the rules of virtue in women, like the tenets of an established religion, very proper things to inculcate, but what the people of sense and discernment of both sexes professed without regarding, and transgressed while they recommended."<sup>1</sup> Though he need not have gone out of his native country to learn principles which were freely enough acted upon within the four seas at the time of which we are speaking, there is little doubt that his open and defiant profession of disbelief in personal morality was a consequence of his early training at the Court of Louis XIV. Had he remained in England until he arrived at years of discretion, he might, it is true, have not been less immoral, but he would have been more reticent. It is our English way to treat morality with a show of respect, even when we do not allow it any power; and to visit any open infraction of recognized etiquette with a disapproval nicely graduated to the popularity of the offender. No man is safe with us who disregards this national peculiarity. We do not ask him to be sincere, but he must be decently conventional; and if he flaunts his vice before us, instead of practising it in decent obscurity, he must take the consequences. Lord Chesterfield failed to realize this necessity. He did not believe in morality, except as a kind of fiction contrived for the smoother working of the social system, and he made no secret of his scepticism. He liked vice, and he practised it without dissimulation; he coveted the reputation of a Cupidon and used every conceivable means to obtain it, in the same way as he would have tried for any other object of desire. Master of artifices as he was, he was somehow incapable of deceit. Imbued with affectation, he was above hypocrisy, and, whether from vanity or a worse motive, never pretended to be better

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

than he was. Hence he earned a character for viciousness which he deserved no more than many a man of unblemished reputation who had what, with all his graces of expression, he never possessed—the tact of reticence.

This detestable ambition to be considered “a man of gallantry” must, if certain reports are to be credited, have led him at this period to engage in an adventure which coloured the whole of his future life; and by that fateful contradiction that always attended him, while it left an indelible stain upon his character, has proved the means by which his reputation is chiefly preserved. There happened to be at The Hague, in 1732, a young French woman of gentle birth named Du Bouchet, acting in the capacity of *dame du compagnie* to the orphan daughters of a wealthy Dutch merchant, who were known to be not only heiresses but beauties. Madame du Bouchet herself had considerable personal attractions, and was very accomplished; but had also the reputation of being a prude. Lord Chesterfield’s celebrity as “a man of pleasure” had reached this lady’s ears; and when certain stories of his amorous adventures, which we may be sure lost nothing in the telling, were retailed in a company where she happened to be present, she denounced his profligacy with the indignation it deserved; at the same time expressing her horror at the prospect of her young charges being exposed to the contamination of his presence in the society which their position obliged them to keep. Some persons who knew the Ambassador’s weakness took care that the story should reach his ears; and in the exultation produced by such a tribute to his prowess as a lady-killer, he is said to have then and there made the nefarious bet—that he would seduce Madame du Bouchet first, and the most beautiful of her charges next—which bet, so far as it related to the elder lady, he eventually won. The story is bad enough to be true; but so far as we have been able to discover,

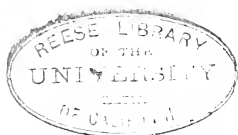




*W. Greatbatch. Sculpt*

MARY LEPEL, LADY HERVEY

*From a miniature formerly at Strawberry Hill*



it rests mainly upon the authority of a Quarterly reviewer, who does not adduce a scrap of evidence in support of one statement which bears improbability on the face of it. That the English Ambassador should, in a mixed company at his own Embassy, make a bet that he would commit the most flagrant of all outrages upon the honour of a leading Dutch family, would have been, to say the least of it, an act of imprudence which no sane man was likely to commit; that, assuming the bet to have been really made, the Ambassador would have proceeded in his cooler moments to carry it out, argues still greater recklessness; and that he should have done so without raising a storm among the Dutch at The Hague, is perfectly inconceivable. That his lordship added the *dame du compagnie* to his list of conquests is certain enough; but with all due sympathy for that injured lady, the term "seduction" seems hardly applicable to her downfall. Her eyes had been fully opened to his character beforehand; their relative positions were such that not even the most foolish of women could have believed that his advances were honourable; nor were the personal qualities of the Ambassador, at eight-and-thirty, likely to captivate her fancy. There is no suggestion of fraud, and there is hardly room for such a suggestion. That a salaried governess in a middle-class Dutch family could have been led to imagine that she would have received the title of Countess of Chesterfield in exchange for her virtue, is both improbable on the face of it and a very poor compliment to her worth and wisdom alike. That she fell a victim to any darker stratagem is not as much as hinted at; nor is it consistent with what we know of the Earl's character, with the circumstances in which she was living, or with the publicity and responsibility attaching to an ambassador's position. There is in fact nothing to make us regard the *liaison* as an exception to those commonplace arrangements which rank and wealth on

the one side, and a mercenary spirit on the other, are only too prone to make when vice encounters necessity or want of principle. The whole subsequent course of relations between the parties is opposed to any other theory. When Lord Chesterfield left The Hague, Madame du Bouchet followed him to England, and lived quietly there upon an allowance which he made her. His marriage appears to have reduced their intimacy to terms of distant friendship, but there was no open breach; and he always treated her with respect and consideration as the mother of his only child. Though they did not often meet, they corresponded; and when he refers to her in his letters to his son, it is always with deference. At the latter's death, a slight variance seems to have occurred between them, owing to his widow having had his funeral conducted in a manner opposed to Madame du Bouchet's wishes, in which proceeding the Earl had acquiesced; and the only tie which bound them being severed, the slight intimacy maintained up to that time wholly ceased, nor was it resumed during the Earl's life. By his will he left her the sum of £500, "as some compensation for the injury he had done her"—a sum which appeared to her, as it will to most people, a very inadequate atonement. But, as is pleaded by his biographers, the Earl probably considered that he had already made a sufficient provision for her, and did not estimate the wrong as of any considerable magnitude. The indignant woman is, however, said to have spurned the "recompense" as an outrage—a display of spirit which commands our sympathy. Looking at it now, a more cruel or unmanly insult than the form and amount of the bequest it is impossible to conceive; and whatever attempts have been made to explain it are utterly powerless to defend it. Like the dying kick of a vicious mule, it seems prompted only by an instinctive desire to wound; and that an ordinarily generous and unemotional man should have perpetrated

an act of such mean vindictiveness must ever remain an ugly mystery.<sup>1</sup>

There were now many reasons why the Earl should wish to resign his post of ambassador. The state of his health had never been satisfactory during his five years' sojourn in Holland; and the effects of the climate were heightened by his own excesses.<sup>2</sup> His fortune had also been considerably impaired by the splendour with which his position was maintained, and the Chesterfield estates required closer supervision than an absent proprietor could bestow on them. No doubt he was further actuated by a desire to reap the fruits of that influence which his experience, reputation, and favour with his sovereign might reasonably be expected to attend his re-entry into public life at home. The desire as well as the necessity for a change became irresistible, and he applied for his recall upon the ground of his failing health, which was indeed a sufficient one, as we find in one of his letters to his

<sup>1</sup> In common fairness, however, we are bound to give due weight to certain considerations which may tend to modify this opinion. There is, first, the form of bequest as set out in the Earl's will (made in 1772), which is as follows:—"I give to Mrs. Elizabeth du Bouchet the mother of my late natural son, Philip Stanhope deceased, Five hundred pounds as a small compensation for the injury I did her." Now £500, at that time, was far from being the equivalent of the like sum at present—it probably equalled five times that amount nowadays; and with the savings which she is likely to have made from her "allowance," might have amounted to a capital upon the interest of which an elderly single lady might maintain herself comfortably enough. What adds probability to this conjecture is the existence of bequests in the same will of fifty and forty guineas respectively, left to two old servants who had lived with him nearly all his life, and this expressed in language which clearly shows that the testator thought he was acting handsomely by them. It should further be borne in mind that meanness was not one of his vices; and that he lays much stress in the *Letters* and elsewhere upon the duty of consideration for servants.

<sup>2</sup> Soon after his arrival at The Hague he was laid up with a bad fever; and the famous physician Boerhaave was fetched from Leyden. The sort of life which his lordship had been leading may be guessed from the advice appended to that doctor's prescription (*Venus rarius colatur*). See this illness alluded to in the *Suffolk Correspondence* (30 May, 1738), vol. I, p. 294.

son :<sup>1</sup> "I had," he says, "that year (1732) been dangerously ill of a fever in Holland ; and when I was recovered of it the febrific humour fell into my legs, and swelled them to that degree, and chiefly in the evening, that it was painful to me, as it was shocking to others." Such was his condition, in fact, that humanity as well as expediency demanded that his request should be granted ; nor need we speculate with his biographer, Dr. Maty, that "the very reason which had procured him his appointment, the fear of his acquiring too great an interest with his sovereign," may have been the motive for granting it. Amid general regrets he left Holland, a helpless invalid ; and for nearly six months afterwards was treated by Doctors Mead, Broxholme, and Arbuthnot without success, when "the most eminent surgeon of St. Thomas's Hospital" (Palmer) managed to effect a cure by pickling the debilitated limbs in hot brine "which must have had meat salted in it,"<sup>2</sup> thus putting the Earl on his legs once more.

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 15 November, 1766. (Bradshaw, vol. III, p. 1351.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

# V

## CONTEST WITH WALPOLE

**R**ESTORED to comparative health, Chesterfield was not long in making his presence felt at home. The avowed ambition of his life was to gain distinction as an orator, and with this object he took a prominent share in the debates in the House of Lords, where at first his support was given to the Government. The question of having a standing army at all was then a burning one, and the Ministry were at their wits' end to defeat a proposed reduction of the existing number of the regular troops from 18,000 to 12,000 men. It is amusing to read the arguments advanced on both sides, but especially those of the Ministerialists. "The old phantom of the Pretender," as Smollett calls it,<sup>1</sup> "and the national bugbear of popery were flaunted before the public eye." Sir Robert Walpole insisted that a reduction of the army was the darling aim of all the Jacobites in the kingdom; that no such reduction had ever been made without imparting fresh energy to all who were disaffected to His Majesty's Government; while Sir Arthur Croft maintained that a reduction must be fatal, inasmuch as, to his own knowledge, popery was increasing very fast in the country, "for in one parish which he knew there were seven popish priests." Lord Chesterfield opposed the measure on broader and more statesmanlike grounds. He maintained that the existing number of troops was barely sufficient for the security of the nation,

<sup>1</sup> *History of England*, vol. XI, p. 5.

whilst it was not so considerable as to inspire any patriotic fears. He declared that he had too good an opinion of his countrymen to believe that they could be enslaved by so small a body; and likewise too good an opinion of the gentlemen of the army to think they would be base enough to concur in such a design. As for the notion of replacing the standing army by a militia, he utterly repudiated it as an experiment which must end in disaster. The fight was a tough one in both Houses, but the country at large took little interest in it,<sup>1</sup> and the vote for an unreduced standing army was eventually carried.

So far Chesterfield had played his rôle dexterously. He had earned the gratitude of the King by safeguarding an institution upon the maintenance of which the royal heart was most strongly set, and he had impressed the Minister with a full sense of his value as a supporter. Had he persevered in this course there is little doubt but that his name must have figured prominently and permanently in the political history of his time, instead of appearing fitfully at intervals, only to disappear before it had stamped itself on the national memory. Unfortunately the Earl was one of those persons who are capable of leading, but not of obeying. Of discipline, as applied to himself, he had no conception. Give him responsibility, and he would prove himself worthy of the trust; but it must be an unfettered responsibility. Having the fullest confidence in his own powers, and no very exalted opinion either of the judgment or the principles of the rest of mankind, he was not to be depended on to execute orders which did not commend themselves to his judgment or inclination. In a word, he was a bad subordinate; and as preliminary obedience is the indispensable gradient to political power, he never attained the latter except by accident. Unluckily for Chesterfield, he had to deal with one of the most autocratic ministers that ever held power.

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 164.



Easy-going, genial, tolerant, and forgiving, as Walpole might be; indulgent to the mistakes of others, and generous in the requital of service, there was no man in all England who less brooked opposition, who swept obstacles from his path with less remorse, or who visited disloyalty with a heavier hand. Indulgent to errors of judgment or omission, he was the easiest of masters if allowed to have his own way; opposed, he became the most relentless of enemies, and such was his influence in the highest quarters that to incur his displeasure was practically to exclude the offender for the time being from all hope of preferment. Now at this time Walpole was engaged in maturing what is known as his "Excise Scheme," a most necessary and, upon the whole, skilfully devised measure, by which he hoped to check those frauds upon the revenue which had been growing ever since the Excise duties were first levied in the time of the Civil Wars,<sup>1</sup> as well as to increase the revenues of the country. Hitherto only certain commodities, such as malt, salt, spirits, and wrought plate, had been subject to taxation, and to these he now prepared to add tobacco and wine, as commodities which, being on pretty much the same footing, had no special claim to exemption. But the very name of Excise was hateful to the country, and when the Opposition got scent of the scheme, it began to work upon the popular mind with all the means at its disposal. Taking advantage of the circumstance that the Government Bill on the subject was not yet drafted, it represented through its organs of the Press, and by rumours spread throughout the country, that what was really impending was a scheme of general Excise, a tax upon all commodities whatsoever, which was quite sufficient to set the popular mind aflame. Pulteney denounced the project as "monstrous," and as really a plot devised to secure arbitrary power for the Crown; and although Pelham suggested that it would be

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, *Hist.*, vol. II, p. 242.

better to wait until the plan was disclosed before condemning it, the House of Commons was not in the mood to take such advice. Public meetings were held in London and elsewhere to devise a plan of campaign against the obnoxious project, and parliamentary constituencies all over the country sent instructions to their members to vote against every extension of the Excise laws "in any form or on any pretence whatsoever."<sup>1</sup> In politics, as in war, to be first in the field is an immense advantage; and although Walpole hastened to ward off their attack, the Opposition were now too strongly posted to be easily dislodged. It mattered little that in a preliminary speech in Parliament he disavowed the project of a general excise; that he explained how it had never been his intention to bring any additional commodities but tobacco and wine within the scope of the duties, and that for the present he only meant to tax the former; or that he showed how, by the system of fraud which he was attempting to prevent, scarcely more than one-fifth of the gross revenue ever reached the Exchequer. In vain he pointed out that the increase of revenue which might be hoped for as a result of the measure would enable the land-tax to be abolished; and that a system of "warehousing for exportation" which he had in view would "tend to make London a free port and by consequence the market of the world." In vain he exposed the fallacy of supposing that the number of revenue officers must be largely increased, or their powers of interfering with the liberty of the subject augmented. The Opposition were implacable, and the outside multitude was not to be reached by argument. The doors of the House were beset by furious crowds, who believed that the nation was threatened with popery, slavery, and ruin, and who, when they learned that Walpole had most imprudently spoken of them as "sturdy beggars" in the course of his speech,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 244.

clamoured for his blood. After a thirteen hours' debate the Government snatched a narrow majority in a crowded House, a victory almost equivalent to a defeat; and as Walpole was going to his carriage he was mobbed by the crowd, who would probably have inflicted severe personal injury upon him had not Pelham interposed.<sup>1</sup> The situation was indeed desperate; worse still, the Minister was virtually committed to it, for had he been personally disposed to retreat, the King, whose heart was set upon the Excise Bill, as it invariably was upon every scheme for augmenting the Royal Exchequer, would not hear of its abandonment. Then it was that the straitened Minister looked for aid to those uncertain allies whom gratitude for favours bestowed might be hoped to influence; and then it was they failed him.

From Chesterfield the beleaguered Minister was justified in expecting much. Having once ascertained that the Earl was not implicated in Townshend's scheme for putting him forward as a rival to himself, he had showered kindnesses upon him with no stinting hand. The office of Lord Steward had been the first token of good will, acknowledged by the receiver with the warmest professions of obligation only three years before; and to this had been added the darling object of Chesterfield's ambition, the Order of the Garter. In addition, many things had been done for the Earl's friends or dependents at his personal solicitation; so that, altogether, Walpole had a fair claim to his gratitude, and the only way in which such gratitude could be then evinced was by giving a general support to the Minister's policy. For some time this support was accorded; but whether from conviction, or from that impatience of control which was so characteristic of the man, he chose the present opportunity of proclaiming his

<sup>1</sup> So Lord Mahon. Hervey says that to avoid the rabble he went out of the House the back way, through the Speaker's chambers, and got off quietly. —Vol. I, p. 182.

independence, and openly declared against the Ministry. In the strongest terms he denounced the Excise scheme from his place in the House of Lords; and no doubt at his instigation his three brothers voted against it in debate in the Commons. That he may have acted thus upon conscientious grounds, and from a sincere belief in the dangers of the scheme, is of course possible; but it is difficult to understand how the nature of the measure could have raised such apprehensions in a statesman of his experience, knowledge, and judgment. It aimed chiefly at administrative reforms, which were absolutely necessary. Nobody denied that the revenue was, under the existing system, being defrauded to a scandalous extent; nobody, at least no responsible person, demanded the abolition of Excise, and the only popular commodity which it was proposed to add to the excisable articles was one which it was a misnomer to call anything but a "luxury." The "Tobacco Bill," as it had now come to be termed, was perfectly legitimate in principle, and the Government had offered the strongest guarantees that it would not be oppressively carried out in practice. Hence, as we have said, it is not easy to discern the scruples by which so able a man as Chesterfield was led to oppose it with a determination which must have been particularly galling to his benefactor.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he was somewhat influenced by the fact that his friend Lord Scarborough had avowed to Walpole his intention to oppose the Bill if it should ever reach the Lords, not because he objected to the scheme in the abstract, but because public opinion being against it "he was determined not to cram it down the people's throats." But it was suspected that, on the contrary, Lord Scarborough had been led into this course by Lord Chesterfield, who, according to Hervey, "governed him as absolutely as he did any of his younger brothers." Moreover, it was reported that a strong party in the Court itself was dis-

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 185 *et seq.*

affected on this point. Nor by this action was he only compromising his interests with Walpole. His defection at such a crisis was certain to be strongly resented at Court, where the fortunes of the Bill were watched with painful anxiety. The King was in a fever of excitement; the Queen, who esteemed Walpole her husband's guardian-angel, distracted with apprehension; and both were full of resentment against those who opposed the measure. But it was doomed nevertheless. Before the time appointed for the second reading, Walpole found that circumstances were too strong for him and resolved to drop the Bill, though, to save the appearance of compulsion, he decided to refrain from doing so until after the expected rejection of a petition against it from the City of London. This delay was unfortunate, the petition being rejected, in a full house, only by a narrow majority of seventeen votes. Once more had victory proved as bad as defeat. Elated by the closeness of this division, the Opposition counted upon a total change of administration, including the dismissal and disgrace of Walpole, and their demeanour became such that even that lion-hearted Minister lost his nerve. "He stood," says Hervey, "some time after the House was up, leaning against the table with his hat pulled over his eyes, some few friends with melancholy countenances around him, whilst his enemies, with the gaiety of so many bridegrooms, seemed as just entering on the enjoyment of what they had been so long pursuing." When the Queen learned what had happened the tears ran down her cheeks, and for some time she could not utter a word; at last she said: "It is over, we must give way." Indeed the necessity for doing so was only too apparent. On the morrow after, when the order for the second reading of the Tobacco Bill was read, Sir Robert proposed putting it off for two months, which was only a decent way of withdrawing it; against this proposal the Opposition stormed violently at first, though it was eventually carried without a division.

This, however, failed to satisfy the infuriated mob outside, who, not understanding the ruse, concluded that the obnoxious measure was still in abeyance; and Walpole's friends implored him to retire from the House by a private exit, so as not to expose himself to their attack. This he stoutly declined to do; and attended by a few gentlemen, faced the danger. It was no imaginary one, for the party had to fight their way through a storm of blows and missiles, in which three of them were wounded, before Walpole reached his coach and succeeded in getting away. When the news reached them the King and Queen were incensed and grieved beyond measure. Sir Robert had previously offered to resign, as the best solution of the difficulty, and this offer he now renewed; but the King would not hear of it, whilst the Queen chid him extremely "for having so ill an opinion of her as to think it possible for her to be so mean, so cowardly, and so ungrateful, as to accept such an offer." Further, alluding to the reports that certain members, not only of the Ministry but of the royal cortège, had either acted with the Opposition or refused to act against them, she added that "discipline was as necessary in an administration as in an army; that mutiny must no more go unpunished in the one than in the other; and that refusing to march, or deserting, ought to be looked upon in the same light."<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, the King coincided with her, nor was Sir Robert himself unwilling that his enemies and false friends should be made to smart for their conduct. He resolved to show that, however tolerant he had been hitherto, he was able both to discern and punish those who ventured so much upon his forbearance; and as he was given a free hand by his royal master, he struck hard and swiftly. Lord Chesterfield was one of the first to feel the weight of his resentment. On the second day after the Bill was dropped (13 April), as he and Lord Scarborough, on leaving the

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 194 *et seq.*

House of Lords, were going up the great stairs at St. James's Palace, he was stopped by one of the Duke of Grafton's servants, who announced that the Duke wished to see him on business of importance, and would call upon him at his own house. Lord Chesterfield at once returned home to await his visitor, who had already called there in the hope of finding him. It was not long before the Duke reappeared, and announced that, by the King's orders, he had come to demand the surrender of his white staff as Lord Steward. The Earl of course surrendered it, merely requesting His Grace to assure the King that he was ready to sacrifice everything for his service, except his honour and conscience; and next morning sent the King a letter to the same effect, which Sir Robert Walpole, to whom the King showed it, described as "extremely laboured, but not well done" (Hervey, I, 211). No notice was taken of either communication; but the post of Lord Steward was immediately conferred on the Duke of Devonshire; and when the Earl next presented himself at Court, as he did with remarkable aplomb on the first opportunity, his reception was such that he never again ventured into the royal presence till the necessity of the times occasioned his recall. His dismissal and that of Lord Clinton from the posts of Lord of the Bedchamber and Lord-Lieutenant of Devonshire, respectively, had an effect greater than that of mere retribution. In Hervey's opinion it saved the Ministry, for it "put a damp on people's expectation of a change, which expectation, joined to the clamours of the disobliged and the vigorous attack of those who reckoned themselves next oars, would, without this express declaration of the Crown to support Sir Robert, have infallibly got the better of him." Be that as it may, its effect was sufficiently great, and gave augmented power to the powerful clique, including, besides the peers already mentioned, the Dukes of Argyll, Montrose, and Bolton, the Earls of Stair and Marchmont, Lord Cobham, and others who held

office under a Government to which they were disaffected, and who now felt that their own fate was trembling in the balance. To Chesterfield, however, the result was far more serious. All the fruits of devotion to the King in bygone years, all the labours of his diplomatic skill and energy, all the hopes of future advancement raised by his recent services to the Government, were frittered away in an ill-advised attempt at self-assertion. Time or necessity might indeed bring about a reconciliation with the offended Minister, who rarely harboured malice long, and never allowed it to interfere with expediency; but with the King it was different. His Majesty was none too prone to forgive of his own accord; and if he had been, the Queen, who had now a double reason for hating Chesterfield, would take good care that he did not. In vain the Opposition strove to break the fall of their recently-gained ally. Their organ, the *Craftsman*, after enumerating his services and eminent qualifications, protested against the dismissal of so able and faithful a public servant at so critical a juncture. But the Ministerialists met this appeal by denouncing in the *Free Briton* the indecency of calling the King to account for his dealings with regard to his own servants, and upbraided the Earl with his ingratitude for the many marks of royal favour which he had received. According to the recognized code of public morality at the time, this rejoinder was unanswerable. Chesterfield having received wages from the Government, was, in most people's opinion, bound not to work against them; and if the *Free Briton* had stopped there, it would have done its employer better service, but the incautious scribe displayed too much zeal, and by doing so laid it open to discomfiture. He went on to speculate that some misbehaviour or error might have necessitated His Majesty to remove one whom he had so particularly distinguished; and even hinted that if the authority of the House of Lords and the fear of an action for *scandalum magnatum* did not





*Antoon Funck.*

*J. Vanhaeken Sculpt.*

QUEEN CAROLINE

1736



deter him from speaking the truth of a peer, he could disclose the reasons for his lordship's dismissal. This gave Chesterfield an opportunity of which he was not slow to avail himself. He at once wrote to the *Free Briton* that it was perfectly at liberty to say what it knew, or pleased, of him without the slightest risk of unpleasant consequences to itself, and scornfully invited it to "do its worst." The challenge was not accepted, and the Earl so far retired with the honours of war. Nor did those members of the administration who had aided and abetted his proceeding in the matter of the Tobacco Bill, altogether desert him in the hour of his adversity. The Lords Cobham, Stair, and Westmoreland came to him immediately after his dismissal, and offered to surrender the employments which they held under the Crown. From this course he dissuaded them, advising that they should, at all events, throw upon Walpole the trouble and odium of taking away their places—which Walpole did very promptly, the consequence being that the Opposition in the House of Lords was strengthened by their accession and by that of the Dukes of Montrose and Bolton,<sup>1</sup> the Earl of Marchmont, and the Earl of Burlington. In one way, therefore, Lord Chesterfield had gained by his reverse; he was now one of the acknowledged heads of his party, instead of being the mere retainer of a powerful chief, with that consciousness of being held in leading-strings which to men of his peculiar temperament is so intolerable; and that he might prove far more dangerous as an opponent than he had been obstructive as a supporter, was a contingency with which Walpole does not seem to have reckoned. To counteract in some measure this increased weight of opposition in the Lords, Walpole raised to the peerage two of his most eminent commoners—Sir Philip Yorke, the Attorney-General, who became Lord

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham, who only held commissions in the army, were deprived of their regiments.

Hardwicke and Lord Chief Justice; and the Solicitor-General, who became Lord Chancellor with the title of Talbot; but it was felt and proved that this reinforcement was inadequate to the occasion, and Walpole's best friends acknowledged that he would have done better had he exercised more self-restraint in avenging his defeat.

There being no longer any need for subterfuge and concealment, Lord Chesterfield became virtually the leader of a compact contingent which waged open war against Walpole. In addition to the peers already mentioned, it included the formidable names of Pulteney and Bolingbroke, both men of perhaps higher ability than himself, but neither equally fitted for command. Pulteney was too rash; Bolingbroke too indolent and vacillating. And as the rest were mediocre, Chesterfield, who to acknowledged talents added energy, resource, and the invaluable quality of taking his own line and keeping to it, naturally came to the top. A reference to the archives of the party, such as those which have come down to us in the *Marchmont Papers*, leaves no doubt on this point. We find him assuming the position of director-general, and being accorded the deference owing to one whose claim to that position is acknowledged by his fellows. The contingent did very useful service in the campaign now being hotly waged against the Minister by throwing its whole weight at the right moment on such points of attack as were selected by the formal Opposition. The conflicts were at first not numerous or important, nor was the attack invariably successful, but as a whole the result was damaging to the Government; and on one occasion at least, when a Bill for appropriating part of the Sinking Fund formed the subject of debate, a division effected by Chesterfield, Bathurst, Carteret, and Stafford had almost wrecked its fortunes. At length, on 11 June, the session was wound up; and in his closing speech the King showed his vexation by a pointed allusion to "the wicked endeavours

that had been lately used to inflame the minds of the people by the most unjust representations." Whatever doubt might have existed previously as to the extent of the royal animosity against his old favourite, there was room for none now.

Whether from a miscalculated notion that a connection, however remote, with the Royal Family might prove the means of reinstating him in the King's favour, or from his fatal tendency to the inopportune where his own personal interests were concerned, or merely from a wish to recuperate the losses which extravagant living and his passion for play had entailed, Chesterfield selected this very time for taking a step of which ordinary prudence might have suggested a postponement to a more fitting season. He suddenly resolved to marry and range himself, the object of his choice being a lady in whom the King was particularly interested, and whose union with one under the shadow of the royal displeasure was not calculated to propitiate His Majesty in favour of herself or her husband. Melusina de Schulenberg,<sup>1</sup> the *soi-disant* "niece" of that Duchess of Kendal who had filled a high position in the domestic establishment of the late King, might have been married to Lord Chesterfield at any time for twenty years back. When she first came to England in the train of His Majesty, twenty years before, she was, as Walpole maliciously remarks, "not a girl";<sup>2</sup> but she had good

<sup>1</sup> For a somewhat garbled account of this lady, see Maty, vol. I, pp. 133-4.

If the morals of the Schulenburgs were not irreproachable, their pedigree was good enough. Melusina's reputed father was Frederick Achatz de Schulenburg, Lord of Stehler, Bezendorff, Augern, and other places, and Privy Councillor to the Duke of Brunswick; and her reputed mother, Margaret Gertrude de Schulenburg, of the Emden branch of the family. Her "aunt," the Duchess of Kendal, when Mlle. Ermengarde de Schulenburg, had been maid-of-honour to the Electress Sophia, mother of George I.

<sup>2</sup> Yet she could scarcely have been more when Walpole first saw her at the Duchess of Kendal's apartments in St. James's Palace. These apartments were "on the ground floor towards the garden"; they were afterwards

looks and better prospects, as the probable successor not only to the Duchess's large wealth but to a large dowry from the late King, who had always displayed a paternal interest in her welfare, in token of which she had been successively created Baroness of Aldborough and Countess of Walsingham. On her first appearance at the Court of which her "aunt," the Duchess of Kendal, was a distinguished ornament, she attracted much notice, and more than one noble or needy gallant of that day would have aspired to a hand which was thought capable of bestowing so much. Among these, young Lord Stanhope was generally considered her favoured suitor. In his first youth, accomplished, elegant, and with that experience of the sex which he had acquired abroad, he soon distanced all competitors for the young heiress's smiles, and there is little doubt that the match would have come off if the King, acting *in loco parentis*, had not seen fit to intervene. The story of the young man's wild doings had reached His Majesty's ears, which were particularly shocked by the account of his losses at play; and the King, who regarded extravagance as the worst of vices, would not hear of the match. The rejected suitor, as we know, was consoled in various ways for his disappointment; but Melusina never forgot him. Other aspirants to the hand of the wealthy heiress must, in the very nature of things, have presented themselves, but she remained single; and when, after the lapse of many years, he, a broken-down valetudinarian, returned to her, though time might have blighted her charms, her heart was still fresh, or at least as

occupied by Mrs. Howard (Lady Suffolk), reputed mistress of George II; King George I's *English* mistress (Miss Brett) having another suite of apartments in the same palace. Owing to His Majesty's granddaughters being also lodged in the building, complications ensued which were only ended by the death of the King (*Walpole's Reminiscences*, pp. 125-6). Admitting that at her death in 1778 she was, as he says, "over fourscore," she must have been in her teens when she arrived in England with George I, and could not have been over forty at the date of her marriage. It is indeed probable that she and her husband were much of an age, he being somewhat the elder.

fresh as he wanted it to be. Romance had gone out of both their lives, and the union which they contemplated now was that of friends, not lovers.<sup>1</sup> But she, at any rate,

<sup>1</sup> Whether Melusina von Schulenburg had any flirtations in the past is now undiscoverable, but there are records still extant of at least one passage in Lord Chesterfield's life which has some halo of romance about it. Lady Frances Shirley, fourth daughter of the Earl of Ferrers, was reckoned a great beauty in her day, and is supposed to have at one time captured his lordship's volatile heart before it became impervious to amiable weaknesses—so much so that their intimacy formed a subject of Court gossip. The young lady resided at Twickenham with her aunt, Lady Huntingdon; and Chesterfield's visits there were so frequent as to become a favourite topic with Lord Lovel, a notorious busybody. Of this Sir Charles Hanbury Williams took note in his verses on "Isabella or the Morning," as follows:—

Says Lovel—"There were Chesterfield and Fanny,  
In that eternal whisper which begun  
Ten years ago, and never will be done;  
For though you know he sees her every day  
Still he has ever something more to say:  
He never lets the conversation fall,  
And I'm sure Fanny can't keep up the ball.  
I saw that her replies were never long,  
And with her eyes she answered for her tongue."

Chesterfield had enjoyed the credit of addressing a song to her: "When Fanny, blooming fair," which, by the way, was none of his, though printed in his *Works*. Poor Fanny died unmarried, aged 72, in 1778 (see Walpole, VII, 104 n.). Walpole thus alludes to the fact in a letter from Strawberry Hill to the Rev. W. Mason (18 July, 1778); "'Fanny blooming fair' died here [i.e. Twickenham] yesterday of a stroke of palsy. She had lost her memory for some years, and remembered nothing but her beauty and her Methodism. Being confined with only servants she was continually lamenting, 'I to be abandoned that all the world used to adore!'" In another letter to Sir H. Mann (4 August, 1778) he remarks: "The ancient beauty, Lady Fanny Shirley, is dead. She had lost her head some time, and her senses before, for she has made Lady (Selina) Huntingdon her heir, having turned Methodist when she was no longer admired." The same sneering chronicler had previously written in his *Twickenham Register* (1759);—

Here Fanny, "ever blooming fair,"  
Ejaculates the graceful prayer:  
And 'scaped from sense, with nonsense smit  
For Whitfield's cant, leaves Stanhope's wit.

See Ernst's *Wit and Wisdom of Lord Chesterfield*, pp. 378-9, and Pope's *Works* (Carruthers's Edition), vol. II, pp. 429-30.

There are a number of unfounded statements on record about this young lady; such as, for instance, a *written* one by Horace Walpole to the effect that the intimacy (which, as far as evidence goes, never exceeded the bounds of friendship) between her and Chesterfield did not commence until "after the marriage" of the latter. Walpole adduces nothing in support of his ill-natured insinuation; and a comparison of dates shows it to be highly im-

was disinterested: she proposed to benefit so far as in her lay the only man who had ever possessed her heart. All her wealth, actual and prospective, was to be his; she would lighten the evening of his days with such sunshine as the tender care of a loving woman can bestow; she would be blind to his errors, deaf to his traducers, indulgent to his whims. It was a heavy task for the proud and disappointed woman to undertake, but she fulfilled it nobly. A sufficient proof of her disinterestedness lies in the fact that they were married on 5 September, 1733, almost immediately after his dismissal from Court. By an arrangement which, however odd it may appear to us, was not uncommon in those days, they maintained separate establishments. Lord Chesterfield's house in Grosvenor Square was next to that of the Duchess of Kendal, and the Countess continued to reside at the latter house with her "aunt" as she had done previous to the marriage; whilst, to quote the pompous language of Dr. Maty, his lordship "most constantly divided his time between his business and his own home, and his attentions and duties in the other. Minerva presided in the first, and in the last Apollo with the muses,"<sup>1</sup> which last reference is explained by the assurance that "the accomplishments of her mind, her taste for the fine arts, and in particular for music, rendered her a fit companion for Lord Chesterfield." We may doubt, however, that the husband rated her predilection for music as an inducement to seek her companion-

probable. For instance, "Isabella or the Morning" did not appear before 1740; and according to Lord Lovel's speech therein their intimacy had then existed for at least ten years, which brings the date of its commencement to 1730, whereas Chesterfield's marriage took place in 1733. Further, as Lady Fanny is stated by Walpole to have been seventy-two at the date of her demise in 1778, she must have been born in 1706, and was therefore at the time of the marriage not less than twenty-seven years old—an age which, though still young, is not usually reckoned as that of a girl in her "bloom." The fact seems to be that Walpole (who was not born before 1717) did not make the assertion of his own personal knowledge. Nor is it easy to say why he made it at all, though there were doubtless very good grounds for his hesitating to *print* it.

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 134.





*Heath Scul<sup>pt</sup>.*

THE HONBLE. MRS. HOWARD, AFTERWARDS COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK



ship, his taste not lying much in that direction ; and there is no ground for believing that "by her tenderness and virtues she merited all the return he could make ; while by her prudent management she helped to retrieve and improve his long-neglected estate."<sup>1</sup> That they continued to live on excellent terms during the forty years of their wedded life was probably due to the absence of exacting affection on either side. The husband was free to follow his own bent without any reproaches from the wife, and the wife, not being burdened with the cares of a family, was able to accord the husband whatever attention he required at her hands.<sup>2</sup> When the infirmities of old age overtook him, she nursed him through his attacks, and always evinced a most anxious concern for his recovery. She watched by his death-bed, defended his reputation when he was no more ; and the adulatory biography which, whatever its defects, is the best and most authentic record of his life that we possess, was undertaken by her wish and at her expense. There must have been a great deal of good in poor Melusina, although Hervey terms her an "avaricious fury,"<sup>3</sup> and Walpole holds her up to ridicule ; nor did she come of a very reputable stock.<sup>4</sup> Of her personal appearance we have no exact description, and the silence on this point is rather suggestive ; but in her portraits she is represented as a tall, dark-haired, graceful woman, who might well have been attractive in youth. She only survived her husband a few years, dying in September, 1778, when over eighty, having in the previous year had a stroke of palsy ; and Walpole tells how, in the obituary notices of the event, currency was given to the oft-repeated scandal "that the late King, at the instigation

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> See Ernst, p. 80 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Her mother was, beyond all doubt, the Duchess of Kendal, mistress of George I, and her sister or cousin, Madame d'Elitz, was said to have lived in the same capacity with three generations of the Hanover family ; but there does not seem to be any imputation on Melusina's character in this respect. Hervey, vol. II, p. 300.

of Sir Robert Walpole, had burned his father's will, which contained a legacy to that, his supposed, daughter; and I believe his real one, too, for she was very like him." Though Sir Robert Walpole had no share in the transaction, the rest of the story was true; and Lord Chesterfield is actually said to have been about to take legal steps to recover a sum of £40,000, to which his wife was entitled under the will in question, when, by the advice of the then Lord Chancellor, His Majesty consented to compromise the matter by the payment of £20,000, which was accepted.<sup>1</sup> The Countess had managed to acquire a great deal of money in various ways, but her expectations from the Duchess of Kendal were not realised, though that lady possessed great wealth, derived not only from her pensions and allowances, but from the bribes which she freely accepted—notably one of £10,000 from Lord Bolingbroke—and the revenues which she drew as Countess of Munster (Ireland), Baroness of Glastonbury, Countess of Faversham, and Duchess of Kendal, etc.

The Earl did not display any of that elation in respect of his marriage which is customary with bridegrooms. On the contrary, he was curiously reticent. There is not even an allusion to his approaching nuptials in his correspondence with his old and intimate friend, Lady Suffolk, only a fortnight before the auspicious event, in which he expresses the hope that "by Michaelmas he will be seated quietly in his easy chair by a good fire in St. James's Square";<sup>2</sup> and in acknowledging the congratulations of Lord Marchmont he coldly remarks: "I will not take up your time with any compliments to you upon the part you are so good as to take in whatever concerns me."<sup>3</sup> As we have already said, it made little or no difference in his mode of life; and during the period which ordinary mortals

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, vol. VII, pp. 128, 141.

<sup>2</sup> See *Suffolk Corr.*, vol. II, p. 68 (Letter of 17 August, 1733.)

<sup>3</sup> *Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, p. 2.

devote to the abandonment of the honeymoon, he was busily engaged in politics. Deeply chagrined by his practical exclusion from the King's Court, he took his revenge by frequenting that of the Prince of Wales, a step which of all others was calculated to incense His Majesty. There he was received with all the attention due to so important an accession. The Prince sent his compliments to the newly-married pair, and his "Court" followed his example.<sup>1</sup> The Prince was then holding his state receptions at Carlton House, which he had recently purchased from the Countess of Burlington; and although the breach between himself and his royal parents was not so wide as it afterwards became, those who frequented the one Court were rarely acceptable at the other. The share which Chesterfield had in bringing about his marriage to the Princess Anne was also gratefully remembered by the Prince of Orange, who, disappointed in some of his own expectations from his royal father-in-law, was perhaps the more inclined to show his gratitude by lavishing attention upon the disgraced ambassador; so that, what with the countenance of these powerful friends and the firm adherence of the leaders of the Opposition, Chesterfield rapidly acquired greater prominence than he had enjoyed whilst still a *persona grata* to the King. Walpole's enemies had now made up their minds that the downfall of that minister was impending; and were only restrained from indiscreet manifestations of confidence by the prudence of Chesterfield. "I hope," he writes to Lord Marchmont, "that it [the prospect of the Government's defeat at the approaching Scotch elections] will not be bragged of. The Court should, if possible, be lulled into a security upon that score; and I could wish our friends would rather seem to despond than discover their strength, which the Court has always means in their hands to lessen when they once know where it is. The Ministry are exceedingly perplexed both

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 135.

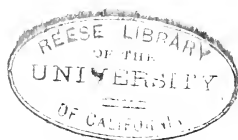
with their foreign and domestic affairs; their elections promise ill for them everywhere. . . . In these circumstances, the Ministers, I think, cannot hold it long, unless they are again supported by those miracles that hitherto have been wrought in their favour upon every crisis. . . . I still think we ought all to be in town a fortnight or three weeks before [Parliament meets] to take our measures together.”<sup>1</sup> He was now the recognized leader of the Scotch peers, who were nearly all opposed to Walpole, and virtually in the same position with regard to the English peers holding similar views; but notwithstanding his dexterous management and their loyal support, the event did not answer his expectations, as the bulk of the nation remained indifferent. An attempt to repeal the Septennial Act failed, owing to the defection of certain members of the Opposition in the Lower House; and the party had no better success in the House of Lords, where Lord Chesterfield took the earliest opportunity of declaring himself by moving that nothing in the address of thanks for the King’s speech should afterwards be made use of, either for, or against, any proposition that might be made, or any question that might arise in the House. His motive for this proposal was soon explained by the part which he took in the debates that followed (Maty, I, p. 137). The removal of the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham from their respective regiments, after the defeat of the Excise scheme, had occasioned much bad feeling among the military; and the Duke of Marlborough moved in the House of Lords a resolution calculated to restrain, in future, capricious exercise of the royal prerogative on purely personal grounds, by a Bill providing that “all officers above the rank of colonel should not be deprived of their commissions otherwise than by the judgment of a Court Martial, or in consequence of an address from either House of Parliament.” Several peers spoke in support of the motion, but none more strongly than Lord Chesterfield,

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 5 October, 1733. (*Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, p. 2.)



Portrait of Sir Isaac Newton  
by Sir Godfrey Kneller

Portrait of Sir Isaac Newton  
by Sir Godfrey Kneller  
1689





who protested that the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham had been "whispered out of their commissions merely on account of their not complying with the wishes of the Prime Minister." He was complimented for his speech by the Duke of Argyll, who, however, opposed not only the Bill, but the motion which immediately followed for presenting an address to His Majesty, praying to be informed by whose advice and for what offences the two lords had been removed.<sup>1</sup> Both the Bill and the motion were rejected, though not without strong protests, in which Lord Chesterfield joined, by the large and influential minority. On this occasion Lord Scarborough took the side opposed to his friend, which is the more remarkable as he had voted in favour of a similar Bill brought forward by Earl Stanhope in the last reign; but he is said to have acted thus in consequence of a direct appeal to his patriotism made by the King,<sup>2</sup> and the circumstance made no difference in their friendship.

Having thus shown his hand, Lord Chesterfield played his cards boldly. As there was every prospect of England becoming involved in the war then raging on the Continent, the King applied to Parliament for a vote of credit to the extent it might be judged necessary to enable the forces of Great Britain to be placed upon a satisfactory footing. The royal message met with considerable obstruction in both Houses, and Chesterfield is again found in the front rank of Walpole's enemies. Replying to the Duke of Argyll, he declared that "what was demanded was not in the least necessary for the support of the King

<sup>1</sup> Upon this occasion the Duke of Argyll indulged in a sarcasm levelled against his brother Duke, whose military reputation was not high: "I am surprised," he remarked, "to hear so much noise made about the removal of two noble lords from their commands in the army. It is true there have been two lords removed, but only one soldier." (Maty, p. 138 *n.*).

<sup>2</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 140. The motion for the Bill, which he attributes to the Duke of Marlborough, was however made by Lord Morpeth. (Smollett, vol. XI, p. 20).

and the safety of the nation, though it might be necessary for the support of ministerial schemes, and for the support of ministerial privileges." He contended that, however necessary it might be to provide for the safety of the country when that safety was actually threatened, there was no such need now, when the danger was merely conjectured, and he completed his argument by the following illustration: "No man will refuse to let an infant of a good estate have whatever may be necessary for his subsistence. For this he has no great occasion for a letter of credit from his guardians; but if these should be such fools, or such unfaithful guardians, as to give him an unlimited letter of credit for borrowing whatever he himself might think necessary for his subsistence, it would certainly tend to throw him into extravagance, and make him a prey to usurers and extortioners." This was indeed a daring attack. It went beyond the Prime Minister to the throne itself; for it undermined entirely the position assumed by the Government, that by the constitution the King had always a sort of dictatorial power, when Parliament was not sitting, to do what he might think necessary in case of emergency; and the audacious enemy followed it up by suggesting outside Parliament, through the instrumentality of the Press and by other means, that "the vessel of Great Britain was steered by the Hanoverian Rudder."<sup>1</sup> The breach between Lord Chesterfield and his royal master was now complete; and although the Prime Minister afterwards showed himself capable of forgetting his injuries, the King was never again quite reconciled to his old favourite, even when it became necessary to employ his services, and was at no pains to conceal the resentment which he, not unnaturally, felt. Meanwhile the work of expenditure in augmenting the national forces went on merrily. Both the navy and the army were increased, the latter being gradually assimilated to the most approved

<sup>1</sup> *Case of the Hanover Forces*, p. 10.

continental models, a process which afforded Chesterfield a theme for constant ridicule. In *Fog's Journal*,<sup>1</sup> a weekly organ of the Opposition, he satirised the new military organization in the manner of Swift, by comparing it to a waxwork army, moved by machinery, and commanded by "a German prince whose dominions and revenues were as small as his birth was great and illustrious." He suggested that as the British army was of no use, a great expense to the nation, and a source of jealousy and discontent, it should be disbanded"; and "that proper persons should be authorized to contract with Mrs. Salmon<sup>2</sup> for raising the same number of men in the best of wax"; that the said persons be likewise authorized to treat with "that ingenious mechanic, Mynheer von Pinchbeck, for the clockwork necessary for the said number of land forces." This plan, he undertakes to say, will render the future army "as useful as ever our present one has been"; will, by producing uniformity of appearance and movement, accommodate it to "the highest German taste," with more to the same effect. The satire was clumsy, but it took the fancy of the public; and he followed it up with other papers levelled at the Court and the Minister. Now, it is the King who, as "Emperor of China," enjoys the pleasure of having his ears tickled by a set of officials appointed for that purpose. "All the considerable people contend for the honour and advantage of this employment; the person who succeeds the best in it being always the first favourite and chief dispenser of his imperial favours," is a hit at Walpole. Next, the parable is changed to a dissertation on the use of eyeglasses, with a special reference to "another glass now

<sup>1</sup> *Fog's* (originally *Mist's*) *Journal* and *The Craftsman*, in which Lord Bolingbroke wrote, together with *Common Sense*, to which several persons of eminence, including Lord Lyttelton, contributed, were the leading organs of the Tories, or Anti-Walpolians. The *Free Briton* was published under the direction of the Minister, who is said to have paid one of the staff, named Arnall, about £11,000 in four years out of the Treasury.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Salmon was the Madame Tussaud of her day.

in great use, which is 'the oblique glass' whose tube, levelled in a straight line at one object, receives another in at the side, so that the beholder seems to be looking at one person, while another entirely engrosses his attention"; and the moralist descants upon the misuses to which such an instrument may be applied as follows: "Suppose we should now have a short-sighted prince upon the throne, though otherwise just, brave and wise . . . who can answer for the persons that are to take care of his glasses and present them to him on occasion? may not they change them, and slip a wrong one upon him as their interest may require, and thus magnify, lessen, multiply, deform, or blacken, as they think proper? . . . On the other hand, should future Parliaments, by the arts of a designing minister, with the help of a corrupted glass-grinder, have delusive and perverse glasses stuffed upon them, what might they see? or what might they not see? nobody can tell. I am sure everybody ought to fear they might possibly behold a numerous standing army in time of peace, as an inoffensive and pleasing object, nay as a security to our liberties and properties. They might see our riches increase by new debts, and our trade by high duties; and they might look upon the corrupt surrender of their own power to the Crown, as the best protective of the rights of the people." And so he continues, ever ringing the changes upon these two dominant themes—the folly and obstinacy of the King; the corruption and duplicity of the Minister. Whatever may be the literary merit of his efforts, they succeeded in attracting the public, by whom the identity of the performer was more than suspected, and were copied into other journals and republished in various forms. In vain Walpole subsidized the *Free Briton* to drown the clamour of the Opposition journal; nobody heeded its hireling strains, whilst every note attributed to the daring Earl was received with acclamation. No venal scribe hunted up from the depths of Grub Street could be a

match for the witty peer, who, to superior knowledge and powers, added the inspiration given by strong personal feeling; and even Walpole was fain to own that his champions had the worst of it. How Chesterfield's conduct in this respect must have incensed the King may easily be judged. The army was, above all, that point on which the monarch was most sensitive. Even Walpole was snubbed if he attempted to interfere with the royal prerogative over its administration. If he so much as asked for a commission, to oblige some of his political supporters, the King's answer usually was: "I won't do that; you want always to have me disoblige all my old soldiers. You understand nothing of troops; I will order my army as I think fit. For your scoundrels of the House of Commons you may do as you please; you know I never interfere, nor pretend to know anything of them, but this province I will keep to myself."<sup>1</sup> Those who merely went so far as to suggest any reduction of the standing army incurred severe displeasure, but for him who had dared to cast ridicule upon the military administration there was no forgiveness. He and his aiders and abettors were pronounced Jacobites;<sup>2</sup> and the irreverent Earl laughingly warns his friends against associating with him, "lest they incur the penalties of high treason as aiding, abetting, and comforting the King's enemies."<sup>3</sup> King George was not the sort of man to hide his feelings, and he certainly made no secret of the detestation with which he now regarded his old favourite. Being informed of a rumour that Lords Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, and Carteret were severally engaged in writing the history of his reign, he remarked: "I shall like to read Bolingbroke's, who, of all the rascals and knaves who have been lying against me these ten years, has certainly the best

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. III, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Hervey, vol. III, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Writing to Mrs. Howard, from Scarborough, Lord Chesterfield alludes to those who are, "in ministerial language, notorious Jacobites, such as Lords Stair, Marchmont, Anglea, and myself."—*Suffolk Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 60.

parts and the most knowledge. He is a scoundrel, but he is a scoundrel of a higher class than Chesterfield. Chesterfield is a little tea-table scoundrel ; that tells little womanish lies to make quarrels in families ; and tries to make women lose their reputations, and make their husbands beat them, without any object but to give himself airs." Her Majesty the Queen's opinion was not less unfavourable, and more epigrammatically expressed. She declared that all three histories would be "three heaps of lies, but lies of very different kinds. Bolingbroke's would be great lies, Chesterfield's little lies, and Carteret's lies of both sorts."<sup>1</sup> Upon another occasion she had amplified the distinction between the last-named noble lords by explaining that "Lord Carteret was a *coquin dans le grand*, but Chesterfield was a *coquin dans le petit* ; that the last was incapable of being a very useful servant to his prince if he would, but that Lord Carteret had really something in him, though he was not to be trusted." Everything, in fact, goes to show that of all their Majesties' lieges none was at this time so thoroughly disliked and distrusted at Court as the quondam Lord of the Bedchamber and representative of His Majesty. Nor was the obnoxious nobleman ignorant of, or indifferent to, the consequences of his own acts. However lightly he might affect to regard his extinction from royal favour ; however daringly aimed were those shafts of ridicule which he discharged through the medium of the Press or in the disaffected atmosphere of Carlton House, there is evidence that his self-possession failed him when circumstances brought him into contact with their outraged Majesties. Of this we have a striking instance when the two Houses of Parliament, having sent messages of congratulation to the Queen on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal to the Prince of Orange (1734), Lord Chesterfield was appointed to deliver that from the House of Lords. It was his first appearance at Court since his marriage, and

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. II, p. 130.

Hervey,<sup>1</sup> who was present on the occasion, says that, whilst the noble Earl's speech "was well written, it was delivered with a faltering voice, a face as white as a sheet, and every limb trembling"—signs of trepidation that would hardly have been expected from one of his age, standing, temperament, and experience. It is true that the manner of his reception was discouraging. Taking advantage of the fact that he had never been at Court since his dismissal, the Queen received him as one personally unknown to her, and showed by her demeanour that she considered his presence as little better than an intrusion. In fact, she afterwards spoke of his undertaking the delivery of the Lords' message as "an impertinence," though the Earl always averred that he meant it as a compliment to herself, and to show that he had no rancour against anyone but Sir Robert Walpole. Her Majesty, who never forgot the disrespect which he had shown to her as Princess of Wales, insisted that his motive was either to turn a compliment paid to her by the House of Lords into a burlesque, or to awe and disconcert her by appearing as the representative of that body; and since she always succeeded in bringing the King to her own way of thinking, the overture of peace only served to make the prospect of reconciliation more hopeless than ever. Chagrined by his failure, the Earl threw fresh ardour into his onslaughts upon the Government, and circumstances played into his hands. The hot debates, lasting for some five months, upon the conduct of the administration in suppressing the Edinburgh riots,<sup>2</sup> and in dealing with various acts of disaffection in other parts of the kingdom, afforded him an opportunity which he did not neglect; so did the estimates, the question of illegal practices in the election of peers for Scotland, the allowance to the Prince

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. I, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> This was the occasion on which an Edinburgh mob lynched Captain Porteous, of the City Guard, who had fired upon the ringleaders of an attempt to rescue a smuggler from the gallows; and who, having been condemned to death for the offence, was reprieved.—Smollett, vol. XI, pp. 45-52.

of Wales, and other questions which need not be dwelt on here. By his writings, speeches, conversations, and personal influence, he laboured incessantly for the overthrow of the Ministry; nor, powerful as that Ministry was both with Crown and country, did his efforts prove unavailing. Victories are rarely won without losses, and each repulse of the adversary's attack left the Ministerial ranks thinner. Further, if in mere numbers their forces were still superior, the quality of the troops on the other side was better. In respect of intellectual ability there was almost no comparison, and although the Treasury lavished thousands upon its myrmidons of the Press,<sup>1</sup> the latter made but a sorry show against that brilliant band in which Bolingbroke, Swift, Arbuthnot, Chesterfield, Glover, and others, were content to serve without pay. "From the epic poem to the ballad, and from the elaborate dissertation to the periodical sheet," says Dr. Maty, "every engine of argument or wit was levelled against the administration. This had, and always will have, its effect. A few instances of severity against some of the most unguarded offenders could not restrain the greater number, and the popular writers in general succeeded in raising the indignation of the people, and even their laughter, which was of still more consequence." Nor was it long before the attack received a powerful reinforcement. The temper of the time is sure sooner or later to be reflected on the stage, and many a London audience laughed, or cheered, or hooted at allusions which, as was natural, favoured the popular view. Then Walpole made a great mistake. Instead of winking at an annoyance which was sure to die out of its own accord after serving the useful purpose of a safety-valve, he exalted it to the dignity of a public question. Under the pretence of purifying the stage—a display of conscientious precaution which was rather late in the day—he hurried a Bill

<sup>1</sup> From a report of the Secret Committee in 1742 it appeared that in the previous ten years £50,000 had been spent in this way.



through both Houses at the end of the session (1737),<sup>1</sup> by which all new pieces were to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for the time being, and not to be exhibited on the stage without his licence. Everybody, of course, saw through the thin device, and denounced the ill-timed measure as an unjustifiable act of oppression.

It was precisely the occasion to suit Lord Chesterfield, the acknowledged champion not only of the liberties of the people, but of literature and the arts, and he delivered in the House of Lords an oration which his admirers pronounced "Demosthenic."<sup>2</sup> He described the Bill as designed not so much to curb the licentiousness of the stage, but as an arbitrary restraint upon its liberty involving in its consequences a restraint on the liberty of the Press, and as "a long stride towards the destruction of liberty itself." He dwelt upon the suspicious haste with which, at the very close of a long session, it had been forced through the Lower House. He proved that such energetic action was wholly unnecessary in the circumstances, as the lessee of the theatre in which it was sought to produce the most obnoxious of the plays which had given an excuse for introducing the Bill was the very first person to give information of the fact to the Government, and had besides refused to bring it on the stage. He insisted that the existing laws were amply sufficient to punish those who ventured to bring any seditious libel upon the stage, and to deter others from the commission of such an offence. He reminded his hearers that when plays of a far more pernicious tendency had been lately represented there was no thought of a prosecution, and he drew from thence the inference that the action of Government in the present case was dictated by motives other than those alleged. In a remarkable passage he expatiated upon the danger of

<sup>1</sup> Known as the Licensing Bill, of which the purport was to amend the previous Act of 12 Anne, dealing, *inter alia*, with the same subject.

<sup>2</sup> *House of Lords' Debates*, vol. V, 210.

such interference. "One of the greatest blessings we enjoy, one of the greatest blessings a people, my lords, can enjoy," he said, "is liberty ; but every good in this life has its alloy of evil. Licentiousness is the alloy of liberty ; it is an ebullition, an excrescence ; it is a speck upon the eye of the political body, which I can never touch but with a gentle, with a trembling hand, lest I destroy the body, lest I injure the eye upon which it is apt to appear. . . . Suppose it is true that the laws now in being are not sufficient for putting a check to, or preventing, the licentiousness of the stage ; suppose it is absolutely necessary some new law should be made for that purpose, yet it must be granted that such a law ought to be maturely considered, and every clause, every sentence, nay every word of it, well weighed and examined, lest under some of these methods, presumed or pretended to be necessary for restraining licentiousness, a power should be concealed which might be afterwards made use of for giving a dangerous wound to liberty. Such a law ought not to be introduced at the close of a session ; nor ought we, in the passing of such a law, to depart from any of the forms prescribed by our ancestors for preventing deceit and surprise. There is such a connection between licentiousness and liberty that it is not easy to correct the one without dangerously wounding the other ; it is extremely hard to distinguish the true limit between them ; like a changeable silk, we can easily see there are two different colours, but we cannot easily discover where the one ends, or where the other begins." We have in this short extract a very fair example of the speaker's method, considered apart from his style. His favourite plan was to drive a point home by repetition accompanied with variety of illustration. Those who missed the bait once, might take it if placed before them in another light and with fresh colouring ; and the rest of the speech, which is a pretty long one, resembles an ingenious series of variations upon the same theme." The House listened to

the music provided for it with much pleasure, and applauded loudly when the artist sat down : nevertheless, it gave its vote to the rival artist, and the Bill became law. But Lord Chesterfield's biographer finds consolation in the fact that the Earl's speech, which he pronounces "one of the finest specimens of British eloquence,"<sup>1</sup> though it did not hinder the Bill from passing, has contributed to prevent the abuse that might have been made of it in restraining the power of genius, and serving the purposes of ministerial pique or personal dislike. Moreover, the peers took it up with avidity, and by publishing abstracts of it for the use of the general public spread the orator's fame through the length and breadth of the land.

The undoubted champions of the Opposition were Carteret, Chesterfield, and Pulteney, and of these Chesterfield was the most independent and inflexible. His avowed objects were, first, the overthrow of Walpole; and secondly, that which made him specially obnoxious to the King, the discontinuance of that foreign policy which sacrificed the interests of England to those of Hanover. From these he never swerved through any considerations of private interest; for whatever his faults may have been, no public man was ever more free from those incentives which motives of personal benefit too often supply. In the confidence of private intercourse he once remarked to his friend Lord Marchmont, "I want these two great prevailing springs of action, avarice and ambition";<sup>2</sup> and the whole tenor of his life proves the truth of this confession. If equally blameless in this respect, Carteret was less independent. Bound to the King and Queen by as near an approach to friendship as can exist between sovereign and subject, he was often restrained by this consideration

<sup>1</sup> Even Lord Hervey says of this speech that it was "one of the most lively and ingenious he ever heard in Parliament, full of wit, of the genteelst satire, and in the most polished classical style that the Petronius of any time ever wrote."—Hervey, vol. III, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, p. 252.

from taking the course dictated by party interest; and popular opinion was not far astray when it represented him as dragged to success by the bold initiative of Chesterfield.<sup>1</sup> Pulteney was the most unreliable of the three. He fought for his own hand, and more than once imperilled the fortunes of the campaign by choosing to adopt a distinct line of action. Once the doughty henchman of Walpole himself, he had quarrelled with the latter because he thought his own services insufficiently rewarded, and became in consequence leader of that band of disaffected Whigs known as "The Patriots." Lesser chiefs of the Opposition were Bolingbroke, to whom the leniency of Walpole had restored his forfeited estates, though he was still deprived of his seat in the House of Lords, and being besides more long-winded than practical, he gave but small assistance to his party; Sir William Wyndham—perhaps the noblest spirit of them all, but who did not live to see the victory which he had done so much to compass; the Duke of Argyll, also a deserter from Walpole's side, brilliant, eloquent, and versatile, like one of his descendants, but somewhat wanting in judgment; Lord Cobham, a useful and earnest, if not very skilful, fighter; Lord Marchmont, trusty and valued by all; Murray "the silver-tongued," a pretty fighter, though not fond of hard knocks; Lord Stair, a worthy but unfortunate captain; the Dukes of Bedford, Bolton, Queensberry, Marlborough, and Montrose, an ornamental band; the Marquess of Tweeddale, staunch and respectable, with many lesser names who formed "The Rumpsteak or Liberty Club," which used to dine at the "King's Arms," Pall Mall. These, it will be observed, were all peers with a strong infusion of the Scottish element; and it is remarkable that, by general consent, Chesterfield, in spite of his nationality, was regarded as the leader of the Scottish peers. Among the

<sup>1</sup> A popular cartoon of the period represents him as being carried to the Treasury in a chariot of which Chesterfield acts as postilion.



*G. Kneller Pinxt*

*G. F. Stodart Sculpt.*

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE



commoners, Wyndham was, while he lived, the head; next to him came Pulteney, then *longo intervallo* Erskine, Dundas, Sandys, and the yet imperfectly developed Pitt. Nor was female support wanting. The Duchess of Kendal, who found her position menaced by Walpole's influence with the Queen, threw all her venal weight on the side of liberty, and rendered much service, for which she exacted sufficient payment, to his arch-enemy, Bolingbroke. But a far more disinterested and respectable amazon was Sarah, the venerable Duchess of Marlborough, who gave her heart and, what was more, her money to the cause. For some time, also, Madame Walmoden, the distinguished German lady who became Countess of Yarmouth, seemed about to incline to their side; but their offers were not sufficiently tempting, and finding a better account with Walpole, she refrained. The rank and file included about two hundred and fifty more or less reliable members of the Lower House,<sup>1</sup> with a very strong contingent in the Upper, which, as Chesterfield foresaw, if well conducted and united, would not long remain a minority.<sup>2</sup> Behind these were the irregular troops consisting partly of the Tory, or discontented Whig hierarchy; partly of the mob element, which, as a rule, sides with every Opposition, and partly of the Press, a compact fighting body. Such was the army arrayed against Walpole; and whoever its nominal leaders might be, a reference to their correspondence will show that Chesterfield was recognized as the guiding spirit of the campaign by those who were engaged in manipulating its forces. It was, in fact, from him that the generals of divisions took their final instructions before engaging in any movement.<sup>3</sup> As a consultant, Chesterfield never departed from an attitude of calm dignity; and the weight of his advice was much enhanced by the manner of its delivery. In terse but pregnant sentences he describes,

<sup>1</sup> *Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See the *Marchmont Papers in extenso*.

Ulysses-like, the line of tactics he recommends, rarely condescending to argument, but stating his view with a precision that leaves nothing to be misunderstood. In private transactions, however, he resumes the careless gaiety which always distinguished him; and some of his strokes are no less amusing than dexterous. Thus, it being necessary to secure the vote of a somewhat vacillating peer upon the occasion of an important division, Chesterfield undertook the task, which he discharged in the following manner. The nobleman in question had a hobby, that of dabbling in physic, and especially prided himself upon his skill in phlebotomy; so Lord Chesterfield, who was well aware of this foible, resolved to take advantage of it. Calling upon Lord R. one morning, he remarked, in the course of conversation upon different matters, that he was suffering much from headache. "Will your lordship be good enough to feel my pulse?" he asked. Lord R. delightedly complied; found indications of feverishness, and suggested that letting blood might not be amiss. "I have no objection," was the reply; "and as I hear your lordship has a masterly hand, will you favour me by trying your lancet upon me?" "Apropos," said Lord Chesterfield after the operation, "do you go to the House to-day?" Whereupon the gratified amateur-surgeon rejoined: "I did not intend to go, not being sufficiently informed of the question which is to be debated; but you, who have considered it, which side will you be of?" The patient had no difficulty in explaining what was the proper side to take; after which he induced Lord R. to accompany him to the House, and to vote as he pleased—a feat of which he used to boast afterwards that few of his party had done so much as he, in having literally "*bled* for the good of his country." But what gave him most weight among the party which he represented was his reputation for probity. Whatever might be said of its other leaders, his name is seldom or never



mentioned but with profound respect. The letters of Lords Stair, Marchmont, Queensberry, and even of the captious Sarah Marlborough herself, abound with evidence of this. No lampoons are levelled at *him*: even the caricaturists spared him, though his personality was one which might be thought to invite their efforts; and the only satire which, on purely conjectural grounds, is supposed to have been levelled at him has no reference to his public character. If there is nothing to show that he possessed that magnetic power which inspires enthusiasm, he owned at least the gift of securing respect and confidence in quarters where they were rarely felt. Erskine testifies that the exacting Duchess of Marlborough had "a mighty good opinion" of his lordship, and her will bears out his statement. The sceptical Duke of Queensberry had "no doubt of his zeal for the public"; whilst in *An Ode to a great number of Great Men lately made*, in which Carteret and Pulteney are rather scurvily handled, Lord Chesterfield<sup>1</sup> is thus apostrophized:—

More changes, better times, this isle  
Demands. Oh! Chesterfield, Argyll,  
To bleeding Britain bring 'em.  
Unite all hearts, appease each storm,  
'Tis yours such actions to perform—  
My pride shall be to sing 'em.

Walpole's triumph was short-lived. Instead of being demoralised by their defeat on the Licensing Bill, his enemies gained in numbers and cohesion; whilst to make matters worse, the Court, upon whose influence he had lately been driven to rely more and more, was openly divided against itself. The Prince of Wales, throwing off the thin disguise which had hitherto veiled his disaffection, now almost ostentatiously displayed himself as the nominal leader of the Opposition. The question of the annual allowance to be

<sup>1</sup> Smollett is thought by some to have meant the *virtuoso* peer in *Peregrine Pickle* for Lord Chesterfield; though in his history he treats the Earl with a marked respect inconsistent with this supposition.

granted for his establishment and that of the Princess was in all probability that upon which hung his decision as to whether he should treat the Prime Minister as his friend or his enemy; but Sir Robert having supported the King's view, that only half of the sum that it was proposed to settle upon the Prince of Wales should be granted, and having besides urged that bad consequences might ensue if the son were to be rendered independent of his father, turned the scale. The disgust which he had long felt at being excluded from all knowledge of, or participation in public affairs had been with difficulty suppressed, as well as his chagrin at the slights and restrictions to which his personal friends were exposed on account of their fidelity to him; not to mention the paternal command, that he was on no account to receive those who were not in favour at Court.

In all this he saw, or fancied he saw, the hand of the Minister; though there is little doubt that Sir Robert's influence, so far as it was used at all, was employed to moderate the unnatural hatred of the royal parents against their first-born. After the rejection of Pulteney's motion for an address to his Majesty, that he would be pleased to settle £100,000 a year on the Prince of Wales, an open rupture between the Prince and the Minister was declared; the supporters of each took sides without any pretence of concealment, and a protest moved by Lord Carteret and entered in the House of Lords against the rejection of the proposed allowance was signed, if not, as some say, actually written, by the Earl of Chesterfield.<sup>1</sup> Considering the terms upon which the latter had for long been with the Prime Minister, this act of defiance did not make much difference in their relations; but it may easily be understood that it enhanced the dislike of the King and Queen to their son's adherent. The King was too much engaged in abusing his "rascally puppy of a son" to bestow much attention on his satellite; but the Queen was less forgetful.

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 157.





Alluding to the alleged close connection between the two, she observed that, "Let the appearance of confidence be ever so strong, she would answer for it that each of them knew the other too well to know or trust one another."<sup>1</sup> Both the august parents were for turning the Prince at once out of St. James's Palace; but Sir Robert dissuaded them from such an extreme step by representing that it would have the effect of putting their son more out of their power, increase his party, give him the *éclat* of a separate court, and furnish many people with arguments to inveigh against their rigour; and his wisdom prevailed. But for all this, the public agitation raised by the occurrence did not abate. People could talk or think apparently of nothing else. Even the crucial and burning question of the standing army lost its attractions, and the vote for 18,000 men was carried almost without debate. Worse still, the King and Queen became suspicious of Sir Robert's having shown too much leaning towards their son's interests in his conduct of the debate. That poor man protested that the notion of his having had any tenderness for their offspring was most unjust and unreasonable. "For sure," said he, "if ever any man in any cause fought dagger out of sheath, I did so in the House of Commons the day his Royal Highness's affair was debated there." Then he appealed to the Queen, as he had a good right to do, whether she was not treating him very badly by indulging these suspicions; whereupon she pleaded the uneasiness which this affair of the allowance had given her, but owned that she thought the majority by which Sir Robert had won a very small one, especially since the King had paid so dearly for it": to which the Minister replied that it had "only cost the King about £900, the greater part of which had gone to buy the votes of two honourable members."<sup>2</sup> In the end Sir Robert succeeded in convincing her, as he always did, that if the result were not all they hoped for, it

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. II, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Hervey, vol. III, p. 80.

was such as could not have been achieved by anybody but himself.<sup>1</sup> It was undoubtedly owing to his influence that the quarrel between their Majesties and the Prince of Wales was so long kept within the bounds of ordinary decency, though it eventually reached a pitch of violence which set his efforts to restrain it at defiance. The conduct of the Prince when, with inexcusable disrespect in not informing their Majesties of the approaching event or obtaining their consent, he removed his Princess, then in the very throes of childbirth, from Hampton Court to St. James's Palace, and his reception of the Queen when the latter hastened to call upon the young mother, put all hope of a reconciliation out of the question. The advisers whom the Prince summoned to him on this occasion, namely Lords Carteret and Chesterfield and Mr. Pulteney, tried to dissuade him from the course he was pursuing, but in vain; and as was natural, the justly-incensed parents attributed much of his conduct to them. When, too late, the Prince and Princess implored forgiveness for the error, their entreaties were indignantly rejected. The Prince was ordered to leave St. James's at once, and the Princess when she should be sufficiently recovered to bear removal. Both retired to Kew, and their little Court vanished in affright, Lord Chesterfield betaking himself to the healing waters of Bath on the plea of indisposition. For him and for Pulteney, who rushed off to get some partridge-shooting time in Norfolk, the King had small concern; but he thought regretfully of Carteret, who was always a mighty favourite with him and not displeasing to the Queen; and it was from this predilection Sir Robert soon divined that he had to fear most. He complained especially of the Queen's injustice in defending the conduct of a man who was "the generalissimo of her son's army." He said to her reproachfully: "Your heart, Madam, is set upon getting

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

the better of your son—will it be getting the better of him to discard *your* Minister, and take *his*? . . . If your Majesty thinks he can serve you better than me in this contest with the Prince, I own it is of such consequence to you to conquer in this strife that I advise you to discard me, and take Carteret to-morrow.” The Queen displayed all the adroitness of her sex in attempting to disclaim the impeachment; but it did not require a person of Sir Robert’s penetration to discern that her confidence was given elsewhere; and from that day he began to prepare himself for the downfall he saw impending. The plain truth is, Sir Robert had made a mistake, surprising in one so well acquainted with human nature: he had employed with Her Majesty the methods he had generally found successful in dealing with *men*. All through the quarrel with her son he had restrained her almost imperiously to moderation, pointing out her error of judgment, and constantly leading up to the implication that she was not so clever as she thought herself. Whereas Carteret, though on the other side, thought her a wise woman, and told her so, as she took care to let Walpole know. What great events from little causes spring! One slight wound to a woman’s vanity, salved by an alien hand, had undone the labour of years; and the staunch friend and counsellor who spoke too plainly was temporarily discarded in favour of an untried one, who knew how to say agreeable things. What the Queen thought one day, the King was pretty sure to think the next; and in this instance the change of opinion was all the more rapid because her new-formed preference for Carteret happened to coincide with his own long-cherished inclination; nor is it too much to say that the eventual triumph of the *Broad-bottomed party*, of which that nobleman was the head, was the outcome of a woman’s pique.<sup>1</sup> It is true that, ere long, the Queen discovered her mistake, and that on her death-bed it was not to Carteret

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

but to Walpole that she committed her husband's interests; but it was then too late to remedy her error—the mischief had been done—and her ashes were scarcely cold before Sir Robert found his own personal influence over the King to be so precarious that he could only hope to exercise it through the intervention of His Majesty's mistresses. Though it was some years before the crash came, it may be said that his Ministry existed only by a kind of sufferance, as compared with the autocracy which he had previously wielded. The interval merely afforded time for Carteret to enrol and organize his forces. When they were quite ready the Prince of Wales placed himself at their head, an appeal was made to the country by means of a General Election; and this having resulted in a defeat of the Government, Sir Robert had, seemingly, no option but to resign.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Chesterfield had been earning much distinction as one of Carteret's most trusty coadjutors. He and Bolingbroke organized and led that important section of the Opposition which harassed the Ministry through the medium of the Press; whilst in the House of Lords Chesterfield was, beyond all comparison, the most formidable champion on either side. Moreover, he was in high favour with the Prince of Wales, who aimed at making his little Court the sanctuary of letters, in contradistinction to that of his father, which was by no means remarkable for its patronage of the Muses. Though styled by the literary clique that surrounded him "the New Augustus," and patronising letters to the extent of his narrow income, Frederick's dilettantism was not of an absorbing kind, and he relished the companionship of men of the world more than that communion of intellect which was not always easily to be reconciled with regard for his own dignity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hervey, vol. III, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> It is told of Pope that he once fell asleep at dinner while the Prince of Wales was speaking.



There was also this particular charm about Chesterfield, that he was a person whom the King especially disliked ; and this, combined with his wit, elegance, easy manners, and easy morals, made him a delightful companion for one of the Prince's temperament. His influence with the Prince grew rapidly ; and it is even supposed that he won the latter over to his own favourite scheme—that the Electorate of Hanover should be separated from the Kingdom, and held by the heir-apparent for the time being. But there were now other things to be considered than these pleasant relaxations which formed the business of Frederick's little Court. The sudden death of Queen Caroline (20 November, 1737) had completely altered the situation. Walpole was no longer invulnerable, since he had lost the talisman of his power over the King ; and the question now was when and how he should be attacked. It was felt that London was not a safe place wherein to concert measures for this purpose ; there were traitors in both camps, and it seemed the wisest plan therefore to separate these camps by an interval which should render their intercommunication less easy. After some consideration, the Opposition resolved to concentrate their forces at Bath—an idea which may have emanated from Lord Chesterfield, who had already taken up his quarters there. Accordingly the Prince, taking advantage of the Princess's health, which had not quite recovered her trying experiences at St. James's a little before, removed thither with his entourage. He had a rapturous reception. The place was crowded with people of fashion, who, holding themselves released from the royal embargo against attending his Court in town, flocked to it now with reactionary ardour. The Corporation gave sumptuous entertainments, at which Lord Chesterfield did the honours of the place and his servants officiated as attendants, while Beau Nash, as Master of the Ceremonies, exercised his practised supervision in directing the entertainments,

and got laughed at for his pains.<sup>1</sup> There is no reference in the Earl's correspondence to any of those matters for which the Prince's visit was supposed to have been undertaken; and from Frederick's character, it is not unlikely that, so far as he at least was concerned, business was subordinated to pleasure; but that some definite plan of campaign had been arrived at by his lieutenants is probable from the promptitude and unvarying directness of their attack when Parliament reassembled in January, 1738. The old question of the standing army was revived for the purpose of embarrassing the Government, and argued with a vigour and freshness which threw several new lights upon the inconsistencies of Whiggery. When the Mutiny Bill reached the Upper House, Lords Carteret and Chesterfield, especially the latter, urged the reduction of the forces by every argument likely to make an impression upon the electors. "Slavery and arbitrary power," declared Chesterfield, "were the certain consequences of keeping up a standing army for any number of years. The national forces of England were being gradually increased to a magnitude strong enough to keep the people in subjection. At the accession of the late King the army consisted of 6000 men; it now amounted to three times that number, and that, too, in a time of absolute peace. The only object of this increase could be to augment the power of the Crown; to introduce what was practical slavery under the disguise of protecting the liberties of the people"<sup>2</sup>—with more to the same effect. The attack was not successful; but it served its object by strengthening the growing distrust of Walpole's patriotism. Country gentlemen began to say among themselves that this matter of keeping up a larger standing army than was needed looked uncommonly like trying to curry

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Lord Chesterfield's verses on his portrait, placed between the busts of Newton and Pope (p. 393 of Ernst's *Wit and Wisdom of Lord Chesterfield*).

<sup>2</sup> Smollett, p. 67.

favour with the Crown at the cost of the people, which was not at all the sort of thing for which they had been keeping a Whig ministry in office ; and the first symptoms of that desire for change which has proved fatal to so many administrations were not long in making their appearance. Then there was that Spanish grievance so long unredressed. What was the good of a standing army which did not prevent Britain from being maltreated while in the pursuit of trade upon the high seas? For more than twenty years, Spanish *guarda-costas* had been stopping English traders in open waters, searching and seizing ships and cargoes, imprisoning or barbarously treating the crews, and indulging in various forms of insolence and cruelty with an impunity which reflected very badly upon those in charge of British honour and security. The notion of a Minister afraid of war, and hoping to prevent a rupture between the two countries by merely parading an increase of the national forces, did not commend itself to a generation with whom the memory of Blenheim was still green. If anything were needed to inflame popular discontent, it was supplied by the appearance of Captain Jenkins, who produced for inspection one of his ears, which he alleged had been cut off by Spaniards who boarded his vessel ; but which Sir Robert's party declared to have been "cut off in the pillory." Whether the captain was an impostor or not, he contrived to arouse a storm of indignation before which even Walpole was forced to yield. He felt that he must do something ; but still he shrank from war. Fresh negotiations were set on foot, this time with such an aspect of determination that they impressed the Spanish Government and led to the compromise of a "Convention," supposed to be preliminary to a regular treaty, by which Spain agreed to release certain prizes, and to make sundry money-payments in compensation for acknowledged wrongs. But this did not satisfy the Opposition, who roundly accused the Minister

of having sacrificed the honour of his country with the object of keeping his place, and insisted that he had suppressed the real truth in respect of the Spanish depredations, which it declared called for nothing short of war. When news came that the Convention was signed, it was denounced as an infamous betrayal of the rights of Englishmen; and Parliament being met, the Opposition in both Houses displayed a violent confidence that boded ill for the Ministry. In the Commons, Pitt, that terrible cornet of horse, first made his mark as a debater by the vigour of his onslaught upon Sir Robert's foreign policy; whilst Carteret, Chesterfield, and Bathurst, in the Lords, aided by the Duke of Argyll,<sup>1</sup> who had now deserted the Ministry, brought argument, satire, and declamation of irresistible force against a feeble phalanx headed by the Duke of Newcastle. Still, Walpole was not beaten; his majority might be venal, but it earned its wage; and the address to the House, in which His Majesty was thanked for his condescension in laying the Convention before them, was carried in both Houses. The triumph was, however, deceptive. Undismayed by the repulse, "Patriots" and "Tories" now combined their forces and compelled Walpole to institute reprisals, by granting letters of marque against the Spanish in the West Indies. To this there could of course be only one issue; and on 23 October, 1739, that which he had so long and effectually laboured to avert was wrung from the Minister—war being declared with Spain amid general enthusiasm. It was a memorable end to his high hopes, and no one had contributed to that end more than Chesterfield.

War having been declared in accordance with the general wish, a delusive calm succeeded the previous turmoil in Parliament. The Opposition professed itself satisfied and relaxed its efforts during the recess which followed. Unfortunately, at the very commencement of the next

<sup>1</sup> Smollett, vol. XI, p. 81.

session symptoms of another impending storm became manifest. In the King's Speech opening Parliament some indiscreet references to the measures which the Opposition had adopted in forcing their policy upon the Government aroused their susceptibility ; and when the address in reply was moved in the House of Lords, Chesterfield alluded to the fact. His speech was temperate enough, but still a protest. He said that His Majesty's declaration of war had effectually healed up all the former divisions ; that he himself not only approved of the war, but of the terms in which the declaration had been made ; and that if the measures now at last entered upon were pursued with commensurate vigour, an end, a final end, he hoped, would be put to all heats and animosities. He therefore wished that all mention were dropped of past jealousies, since it now appeared that the division had not been between one party and another, but between the whole nation and the Ministry. These sentiments were backed up by the Dukes of Argyll and Bedford, and what was more significant, by Lord Scarborough, who had hitherto lent his support to the Ministry, though remaining on the most friendly terms with the leaders on each side,<sup>1</sup> who had a strong personal attachment to the King, and a conservative predisposition in favour of the existing Government. So far, however, from producing the desired effect, this protest only served to rekindle dormant embers of political animosity ; and Lord Scarborough's defection was resented by Minister and King alike as a personal injury. That unhappy nobleman, who had long been a prey to constitutional melancholy, found his position insupportable ; the severance of old ties left a wound which the consciousness of having acted from the highest motives was powerless to

<sup>1</sup> "As Sir Robert's and Lord Chesterfield's houses were situated opposite to each other in St. James's Square, Lord Scarborough was often seen going directly from the friend to the Minister ; and such was the opinion entertained by both of his integrity that he never met on this account with the least control or censure from either."—Maty, vol. I, p. 171 *n*.

heal, and in a fit of unconquerable depression he committed suicide.<sup>1</sup> His death removed the last check upon his friend's pugnacity ; and henceforth Chesterfield threw himself into the fray with undisguised ardour. He seized upon the opportunity presented by a fancied slight, in a message for extraordinary supply being sent to the House of Commons in preference to that of Peers—a fictitious grievance of which he did not succeed in making very much—in a witty speech remarkable for the following neat distinction : “ We [the peers] have not been injured, but we have been slighted, which is worse ; because a slight proceeds always from contempt, whereas an injury proceeds often from fear.” A better chance presented itself when a Bill against pensioners, which had passed the Commons, was brought before the Lords. In opposing it he dilated with such effect upon the evils of corruption, a system which he had no difficulty in connecting with the Prime Minister, whom he represented “ as still more dangerous to the morals than to the liberty of his country,” that he carried the House with him, and the Bill was rejected. There was no doubt now, even in Sir Robert's mind, that so formidable an adversary must be won over if possible ; and various proposals were made by the judicious Minister with the object of moving him from a proximity which threatened to be ruinous. It was about this time, it is supposed, that the suggestion was first made of his accepting the Irish Viceroyalty, a post which, if we are to believe his biographer, had been the object of his ambition even in early life. The story rests upon the authority of his friend and quondam chaplain, Dr. Chevenix, afterwards Bishop of Waterford and Lismore,<sup>2</sup> whose

<sup>1</sup> There was an attempt to conceal this fact ; but Lord Chesterfield's own testimony is unequivocal. (See his “ Character of Lord Scarborough ” in the *Miscellaneous Works*).

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Richard Chevenix was of French extraction, his parents having left their native country on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. His first patron was Lord Scarborough, by whom he was recommended to

interests he was always ready to forward, even at the expense of his own principles. "One morning," says this divine, "that I was with him, his lordship was expressing how much he was concerned that I was so long without obtaining better preferment, he at once told me in his joking manner, 'Well, I have just thought of a way by which I am sure you'll succeed with Sir Robert: go and tell him from me that I will accept the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. I am sure he will then procure you a good living from the Crown.'" <sup>1</sup> If such temptations were placed in his way, there were, however, other circumstances which prevented him from yielding to them. The position which he occupied at home in England was fast becoming stronger every day, and he soon divined that to abandon it just then would be to throw away the chance of success which fate was placing in his hands. Everything was going against the Ministry. The war, from which so much was expected, languished in a fashion which exasperated the nation. Either owing to defective plans, or to incompetency on the part of those who conducted operations, the results were most disappointing. Millions were lavished on the outfit of powerful fleets that seemed afraid to strike a blow. "It appeared," as Lord Chesterfield expressed it, "that some malign planet hung over British counsels, and retarded or disappointed every vigorous resolution." The success and miscarriage of Vernon were equal proofs of

Lord Chesterfield as his chief chaplain in Holland. In 1745 Lord Chesterfield's influence as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland raised him to the Bishopric, first of Killaloe and then of Waterford. Dr. Chevenix always maintained a grateful sense of Lord Chesterfield's kindness, and continued his regular correspondent until his death (Maty). His granddaughter and heiress, Melusina Chevenix, was the mother of Richard Chevenix Trench, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, and the well-known writer (Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 733 *n.*). Long before the Viceroyalty was offered to Lord Chesterfield he (Chevenix) had been promised the living of St. Olave, Southwark, by Sir R. Walpole; and Lord Chesterfield complained to the King himself of this promise not having been kept (*ibid.*, p. 754, from letter quoted by Maty).

<sup>1</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 173 *n.*

the temerity and the deficiency of our projects; and Haddock's unaccountable inaction induced the witty Earl to say that "the words *flagrante bello* ought to be changed into *languente bello*." The friends of both these admirals attributed their failures to the instructions or neglect of the Ministry, and the people gladly accepted the explanation, which did not tend to increase Walpole's popularity. So things went on during the whole of that unlucky year (1740). Notwithstanding the enormous navy which we maintained, Spanish privateers preyed upon our commerce with impunity; and to make matters worse, the French chose this moment to fling over the treaty they had lately concluded with us,<sup>1</sup> repaired the harbour and fortifications of Dunkirk, which they had promised to demolish, and joined their fleet to that of Spain in the West Indies. Still further to embarrass the unhappy Minister, commerce was virtually suspended, owing to the impressment of sailors taken from the merchant service and the embargo laid upon all ships in British ports. Touched on this its most vulnerable point, the country lost all patience: these causes of discontent, added to other complaints which had been laid to the charge of Walpole, were now exaggerated and insisted upon by his enemies with indefatigable zeal, the result being to render him so unpopular that his name was seldom or never mentioned with decency, except by his own dependents.<sup>2</sup> Scarcely had the year expired when a motion was made in each House of Parliament for an address to the King, praying that he would remove from his councils the Minister to whom the national distresses and difficulties were imputed. Sir Robert defended himself in the Commons with success; but in the Lords, the Duke of Argyll, who had by this time resigned all his places, led a much fiercer preliminary attack,<sup>3</sup> in which he was supported by Lords Bathurst, Carteret, Chesterfield, and Gower, against whom the Duke

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.<sup>2</sup> Smollett, vol. XI, p. 100.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.



of Newcastle, the Chancellor, and Lords Cholmondeley and Hervey made but a poor show. After this, Lord Carteret, in a speech of great ability, brought forward the motion of an address beseeching His Majesty to remove Sir Robert Walpole from his presence and councils for ever. The Duke of Argyll and Bathurst followed suit; but Lord Chesterfield held his peace, though when the motion was defeated he joined in a vigorous protest entered by the minority. It was a dearly-purchased victory: Walpole's character sustained a rude shock in the debate; and though his downfall was averted for the time, people began to see that the end was approaching.<sup>1</sup>

When the session closed, Lord Chesterfield found himself in a state of health which necessitated a resort to the particular treatment in which he always seems to have placed more faith than in other remedies. This time he was advised to try the continental waters, those of Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa being selected. In passing through Brussels he spent a few days with his friend Voltaire, who read to him portions of his last new tragedy, *Mahomet*. There was much in common between the two men, and their correspondence shows that each valued the other. At Spa he stayed about six weeks in company that exactly suited him; and, as we are informed, "was courted and agreeably entertained by persons of different nations distinguished by their rank and their merit."<sup>2</sup> Among these was a Prussian diplomat with whom Chesterfield often conversed about his master, the great Frederick, who was just then making Europe ring with his name. The Earl freely expressed his admiration of "l'homme Prusse," whom he desired to see "the friend, rather than the enemy, of Great Britain"; and this being duly reported to his master by the envoy, the gratified Prince sent Chesterfield a pressing invitation to visit him at Berlin. Circumstances

<sup>1</sup> Smollett, vol. XI, p. 105. *Letters*, 276, 287.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, p. 180.

prevented the Earl from availing himself of this compliment ; but although they never met, or rather, perhaps, because they never did, Frederick retained his favourable impression of the Earl, whom he often pronounced to be the best friend he had in England, and whose son, when the latter afterwards presented himself at the Court of Berlin, he distinguished with unusual civility. Chesterfield, on his side, always expressed in his conversation and letters the liveliest admiration of his would-be host ; comparing his Court to that of Augustus ; and observing, with reference to certain scandalous rumours that his Majesty was not quite sane, "He is only thought to be *mad* in Germany, because he has *more wit* than other Germans."<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield's health benefited considerably by his sojourn in Spa, and he resolved to complete his cure by a tour in the south of France.<sup>2</sup> As a preliminary to this he spent a fortnight in Paris, where every *salon* of pretensions was, of course, open to him, and where he formed or renewed acquaintance with everybody worth knowing. His old friend, Montesquieu, was still to the fore, but sadly broken down by age and its infirmities. "Je sais être aveugle," the old philosopher cheerily observed, when the Earl condoled with him on the failure of his sight ; and long afterwards, when himself deprived of hearing, Chesterfield strove to echo such manly resignation with "Je sais être sourd," as indeed he did.

After leaving Paris he spent a couple of months in the south, visiting on the way Lyons, Avignon, Aix, Nismes, Marseilles, and Montpellier. "It is with pleasure," writes Dr. Maty, "that we trace him during the course of this journey, writing regularly to his son, and giving him accounts of the most curious particulars relative to the towns he passed through." This was not exactly the beginning of that famous correspondence ; but it was not

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Geo. Lyttelton cited in Carlyle's *Frederick*, vol. V, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Chevenix, Bradshaw, p. 762.

till then that it assumed the confidential tone in which the man of the world combines with the elements of historical and geographical knowledge those principles of social science which were intended to result in the acquisition of the "graces." Hitherto, the father had chiefly limited himself to assisting the efforts of M. Mattaire, his son's tutor, to inculcate the humanities, with occasionally hints as to little proprieties of demeanour such as any parent might give to a child of tender years. Now, learning is placed in the background and *good breeding* brought well to the front; also we have the first inkling of that peculiar ethical teaching which is the chief blemish of the *Letters*. Writing from Spa<sup>1</sup> he tells this boy of nine: "However trifling a genteel manner may sound, it is of very great consequence towards pleasing in private life, especially the women; which, one time or other, you will think worth pleasing." It is only fair to add, however, that he reiterates the more wholesome maxim: "The strictest and most scrupulous honour and virtue can alone make you esteemed and valued by mankind." Perhaps the small influence which these exhortations had upon the person to whom they were addressed may be accounted for by the fact that the boy was at the time living under his mother's care in London; and from casual references to her, it is evident that she, to some extent, supervised his education, in which not only M. Mattaire, but Mr. Pelnote and Mr. Martin were engaged.

Events at home and abroad combined to make the Earl's absence a short one. He had evidently contemplated a lengthened absence, for before setting out from London he wrote to Lord Marchmont: "I tell you truly, what I have told to nobody else, that unless the prospect here mends extremely, I shall not be in haste to return, but will make a considerable stay in a country that will do me a great deal of good at a time when I can do no country any good

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 25 July, 1741.

at all. The languor and dispiritedness which have made life burthensome to me all this winter require a better climate and more dissipation than I can find here; and I think it is better conversing with the cheerful natural-born slaves of France, than with the sullen, venal, voluntary ones of England.”<sup>1</sup>

The Opposition in the new Parliament had increased so much in numbers that, as he himself said, “We appear to be so strong that I think we can but just be called a minority.” But it was on this head that he evidently felt most misgiving. Carteret and Pulteney had plainly shown their leaning towards the Court; from which he gathered that they feared the success of the minority, and would therefore try to render it as insignificant as possible. “They desire,” said he, “to get in with a few, by negotiation, and not by victory with numbers, who, they fear, might presume upon their strength, and grow troublesome to their generals.” Upon the other hand, he was for using their strength to the utmost, and with promptitude; so as to afford the Prime Minister no time for those wearing-down manœuvres in which he was so proficient; and he offers his own services in the attack if the party will have them. “I am entirely at the service of you and the rest of my friends who mean the public good,” he declares. “I will either fight or run away, as you determine. If the Duke of Argyll sounds to battle, I will follow my leader; if he stays in Oxfordshire, I’ll stay in Grosvenor Square. . . . Action, I think, there should be, at least for a time, let your number be what they will.” What that action should be was dictated by the course of events abroad, which was moving with appalling swiftness. The whole balance of Europe was being upset by the aggressive action of France directed against the tottering empire of Austria, and openly menacing our own possessions. An almost unbroken series of miscarriages had signalised our efforts against Spain

<sup>1</sup> *Marchmont Papers*, vol. II, p. 251.

alone, and now we were likely to have France on our hands as well. Herein lay the golden opportunity for Walpole's enemies; and Chesterfield sketches the plan of attack. He first suggests: "An address to the King, desiring him to make no peace with Spain, unless our undoubted right of navigation in the West Indies without molestation or search, be clearly and in express words stipulated; and until we have acquired some valuable possession there, as a pledge of the performance of such stipulation. Such a question would surely be a popular one, and distressful enough to the Ministry."<sup>1</sup> A diversion was at the same time to be made by setting up a candidate of their own for the chairmanship of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, in opposition to the Court nominee, who was a very poor creature. Other steps were sure to suggest themselves as the session went on; but action, immediate action, was the great desideratum, whilst the means of dealing a heavy blow were still within their grasp. This advice was in a measure acted upon by the leaders of the Opposition in the Commons; but when the session opened there was a brisk passage of arms in the Lords on the customary motion of an address of thanks to His Majesty for his opening speech, which was framed on the old lines; and true to his pledges, Chesterfield fought in the first rank, or, as his biographer puts it, "thundered out what may be called his first philippic against the minority."<sup>2</sup> It was a bold and well-argued denunciation, which won encomiums from both sides of the House; and though it failed to secure its ostensible object, proved a damaging indictment of the policy foreshadowed by the Ministry. Beginning with a clear and forcible description of the European situation and the decadence of England's power, he argued that this condition could not be remedied but by means different from those which had been pursued, and by the assistance of other counsellors than those who had sunk

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 762 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Maty, vol. I, p. 187.

the nation into contempt.<sup>1</sup> Nothing, he maintained, was more likely to raise confidence in foreign powers still attached to them, or to intimidate those who were hostile, than an open testimony of their resolution neither any longer to approve that conduct by which the liberty of half Europe had been endangered, nor to lavish praises on the men who, in twenty years, never succeeded in anything for the benefit of the country. Citing facts, which were only too numerous, in proof of his contention that the honour and interests of England had alike suffered, and her resources been squandered upon ill-devised and worse-managed expeditions, he besought his hearers to look for safety only in a change of counsel and measures; or, at least, not by their vote commit themselves to the approval of plans which they had not even had an opportunity of examining. The House was charmed, and applauded the speaker; but he met with no more success than Pulteney did in the Commons, as the address was carried. Undaunted by this defeat, Chesterfield took a very prominent part in the debate which ensued on the mismanagement, by which, when the island of Minorca was threatened with invasion, "two-thirds of the officers in one establishment there were allowed to be absent from their posts."<sup>2</sup> He took a very active share in the examination of the witnesses, the discussion of the points in debate, and the protest that ensued upon the motion for a vote of censure being defeated by a narrow majority. In the debate it fell to him to answer the Lord Chancellor, which he did with temper, precision, and clearness, winding up with words that seem prophetic: "I think I am in duty obliged to forewarn your lordship that if ever this island [Minorca] should be lost by any future neglect, the whole nation will impute the loss to your having put a negative at this time upon such a motion . . . for after the loss is incurred no punishment you can inflict upon the persons

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

guilty will be an atonement for your former indifference, which will be considered as the original cause of that loss.”<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that, although the Duke of Argyll was the titular head of the Opposition in the House of Lords, Chesterfield formed the chief connecting link of the party both in that House and in the Commons; and further that he exercised great influence over the Prince of Wales, who was the nominal Commander-in-Chief. To this latter circumstance may be attributed the persistent refusal of all overtures made by the Minister with the object of conciliating the Prince; and this upon the alleged ground of their coming from one whom he regarded as the author of the country’s grievances at home and of the miscarriages abroad. The united front thus presented was too formidable for even Walpole’s resolution. He began to waver. The majorities by which he had hitherto staved off defeat had by this time dwindled to half a dozen; and when the matter of the disputed elections came to be discussed he felt that even these would disappear. The anticipation was realized. When the petition against the election of the Court members for Westminster, on the ground of illegal practices at the poll, were presented, the election was declared void by a majority of four. Sir Robert now saw that he stood on the brink of ruin. He felt that at any moment, were a motion brought forward to commit him to the Tower, it might be carried, and that his only loophole of escape consisted in his dividing the Opposition. To this purpose he applied all his credit and dexterity. First, he made the attempt to detach the Prince by the offer already referred to. He deputed the Bishop of Oxford to inform His Royal Highness that if he would but write a letter of submission to the King, he and all his councillors would be taken into favour, his yearly revenue would be increased by £50,000, four times that sum would be

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

allotted for the payment of his debts, and suitable provision be made for all his followers. The Prince, as we have seen, declined the offer. Once more Sir Robert threw his fate upon a desperate chance. He resolved to try his strength in the Commons in the case of another disputed election; he did so, and was defeated by a majority of sixteen. The end had come at last: he at once declared that he would never more sit in that House, resigned all his appointments, and two days afterwards went out of office.<sup>1</sup>

Thus fell the great Minister who for twenty years had swayed the destinies of the country with a power which, if sometimes autocratic, was, upon the whole, benevolent and judicious—a model to all succeeding statesmen. That the principal factor in his overthrow was Chesterfield is already sufficiently apparent, but it may be doubted that the latter did not occasionally deplore the ruin he had caused. In his "Character" of Sir Robert Walpole, stating what were facts, as that he was inelegant in his manners, loose in his morals, with a coarse, strong wit, which he was too free of for a man in his station, the writer admits that "He was both the best Parliament man, and the ablest manager of Parliament that, I believe, ever lived. . . . He was not vindictive, but, on the contrary, very placable to those who have injured him the most. His good humour, good nature, and beneficence, in the several relations of father, husband, master, and friend, gained him the warmest affections of all within that circle." Walpole, though no longer in office, retained sufficient influence with the King to nominate the minister who was to succeed him, and his choice lay between Pulteney and Wilmington. The former, not approving of certain conditions attached to acceptance of that post, declined it,<sup>2</sup> and Wilmington was appointed, but proved

<sup>1</sup> Sir R. Walpole resigned office in February, 1742, and was created Earl of Orford with a pension of £4000 a year, and a patent of rank for his daughter by Miss Skeritt.

<sup>2</sup> If Walpole's fall excites our sympathy, that of Pulteney, which necessarily



unequal to the responsibility, which eventually devolved upon Carteret<sup>1</sup>—more brilliant, but less wary than his predecessor, and, for the time being at least, a greater favourite with the King and Queen.

accompanied it, leaves little room for regret. Never was any statesman's conduct more fatal to himself. He lost ground alike with King and people. As Chesterfield observed, "the King hated him almost as much for what he might have done as for what he had done; the nation looked upon him as a deserter; and he shrank into insignificance and an earldom." In fact, it is impossible to explain his conduct at this time, for the resignation of Walpole had left him absolutely master of the situation. The King had offered him that Minister's places, with the power of forming his own administration, stipulating only that Sir Robert should not be promoted; and when he declined to accept the vacancy on that condition, he was allowed to substitute Lord Wilmington for himself, and to fill up the other leading offices in the new Cabinet with his nominees. That a man of his character, in such a position, should choose to efface himself by deliberately taking a peerage—for he was not only offered, but asked for it—is one of the puzzles of history.

<sup>1</sup> "The patriots joined the Court" (Duchess of Marlborough to Lord Marchmont, 3 March, 1742). The country, or self-called "patriot" party, in opposition to Sir R. Walpole, had long been divided into two bodies, whose separate tendencies had been for some time sufficiently visible, when his fall disunited them completely. Lord Carteret, the Marquess of Tweeddale, Lord Winchilsea, Lord Gower, and Mr. Sandys took office, as also did the Duke of Argyll, but he soon quitted them. Mr. Pulteney presided over the formation of this administration; but the Duke of Bedford, Lord Sandwich, Lord Chesterfield, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Waller, and Mr. Lyttelton remained in opposition.—*Marchmont Papers*, p. 266 n.

## VI

### THE FORTUNES OF WAR

**A**LTHOUGH forced to lay down his arms, Walpole had ordered matters so that his opponents should profit as little as possible by their success. The explosive elements which, before his fall, he had skilfully thrown into the enemy's lines soon began to do their work. Dissensions arose between the country party, consisting of Tories, and certain discontented Whigs who had joined them; and the latter, tempted by baits of office or preferment, and by the assurance that their wishes would be consulted by a new administration, reverted to their former allegiance. The bestowal of the highest offices, too, was, owing to his unimpaired favour with the King, still practically in the hands of the defeated Minister, who took care that those who had contributed most to his own downfall should be the last to profit by it. Against Carteret he had no particular grudge, for the hostility of the latter had been open, consistent, and unmarked by perfidy; moreover, the King had a regard for that nobleman which Walpole did not care to oppose, so Lord Harrington's post of Secretary of State was conferred upon him, the displaced official being consoled with the title of Earl and made President of the Council. With Pulteney, however, the case was different. Both the King and Walpole owed him many a grudge. He had fought unfairly; had displayed a greed, selfishness, and insincerity that disgusted even his own side, and further, Walpole wished that he should be made to smart. The

mode of revenge was curious. As leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, he was all-powerful so long as he remained there ; the great object, therefore, was to get him out of that stronghold, and, strange to say, Pulteney at once fell into the snare laid to effect this object. Taking advantage of the man's ambition and cupidity, a seat on the Privy Council and an earldom were offered to him. He was so dazzled by the splendour of the bait, that for the moment he forgot what lurked beneath. Scarcely had he swallowed it before he repented,<sup>1</sup> but it was too late, and Walpole had the pleasure of saying to him when they first met in the Upper House : "Here we are, my lord, the most insignificant fellows in England." Never was revenge more complete.

Of the hostile triumvirate, Chesterfield alone reaped neither good nor evil from the change. He had done the ex-minister much harm—perhaps more than the other two, and this in return for benefits received ; but ingratitude counts for little in politics, and upon the whole he had fought fairly enough. Besides, he was invulnerable to attack upon the side of ambition or avarice—those two weak spots in the armour of the rest ; so as Walpole had not much motive for injury, and still less for advancing him, he simply let him alone. The mere fact that, whilst comparatively insignificant members of the party were honoured with preferment, while such a man as Chesterfield was passed over, would be sure, he must have known, to produce popular mistrust of the new Ministry ; and it is therefore not unlikely that the omission of Chesterfield

<sup>1</sup> "It appears that this act of political suicide (for such it proved to the new Lord Bath), though prompted by his own inclination, had been aided and facilitated by the influence of Walpole with the King . . . nay more, when Pulteney wished afterwards to recede from his promised patent, the King, under Walpole's direction, insisted on his taking it. 'I remember,' says Horace Walpole, 'my father's action and words when he returned from Court and told me what he had done—"I have turned the key of the closet on him!" making that motion with his hand.'"—Mahon, *History*, vol. III, p. 177.

from the administration may have been in some measure due to him. Various causes were assigned for this omission—jealousy among the chiefs, dislike in the monarch, and unwillingness on the Earl's part to accept of engagements unless he knew and approved of the terms. As regards the first of these, there is nothing to show that it existed; and we should probably not be far wrong in substituting for it selfishness pure and simple. Every one was striving for a share of the spoil; and as Chesterfield was too proud to join in the scramble, it is no wonder that he was left empty-handed. As regards the second, it is undoubtedly true; the King detested him, and was not magnanimous enough to sink his resentment out of consideration for the public weal. But in the last of the three reasons—which was that assigned by himself—may probably be found the explanation of a fact that much surprises every one who has studied the history of Walpole's downfall. Chesterfield had no confidence in the personnel of the new administration, and no wish to form part of a government which he foresaw was doomed to failure. Writing to his confidential friend, Dr. Chevenix, he says: "The public has assigned me different employments . . . but I have been offered none; I have asked for none; and I will accept of none, till I see a little clearer into matters than I do at present. I have opposed measures, not men; and the change of two or three men only is not a sufficient pledge to me that measures will be changed, nay rather an indication that they will not; and I am sure no employment whatsoever shall prevail with me to support measures I have so justly opposed."<sup>1</sup> That this does not merely describe the jaundiced outlook of a disappointed man, but, on the contrary, a sincere conviction shared by others who had less reason to be dissatisfied, is evident from the disintegration that ensued almost before the Carteret administration took office. The Duke of Argyll, who

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 6 March, 1742.



JOHN, DUKE OF ARGYLE  
*From an old Engraving*



had been titular head of the party in the House of Lords, was so disappointed in his expectations of the coalition that, within a month, he flung up all his new appointments, including that of Commander-in-Chief, refusing to be longer identified with it. The Prince of Wales grew equally disgusted; showed first coldness, and then aversion, to the new Government. Lyttelton and Pitt were not more friendly than might have been expected of quondam supporters who, having done yeoman service, found themselves passed over in the list of promotions. Lords Cobham, Gower, and Bathurst had their separate grievances; so that altogether a very formidable Opposition, springing as it were from its own vitals, began to sap the foundations of the very edifice it had helped to raise. In all this Walpole's handiwork may be traced. The offers by which he had tried to procure a respite were so lavish that those who had rejected them were disappointed beyond measure by the meagre rewards which victory brought them. Excluded from the honours and emoluments of office for nearly a quarter of a century, their place-hunger had reached starvation-point; and it was utterly beyond the power of the new Government to appease it. Every one who had, or fancied he had, a claim to recognition, urged it fiercely, not only upon his own behalf, but upon that of his friends, and considered himself hardly used if the latter were omitted in the general distribution. Thus, the Duke of Argyll was mortally offended because Sir John Hinde Cotton was not made a lord of the Admiralty; and although others did not go so far as to resign their own preferments out of concern for their friends, there were many who felt equally aggrieved. Nor had the new Government the consolation of knowing that, if it had given offence, it had acted for the best. Never had offices been more unsatisfactorily filled; the round man was invariably set in the square hole. Lord Wilmington, at the Treasury, was a farce; Sandys, at the

Exchequer, little better; Carteret, as Secretary of State, a misnomer, as he should have filled Wilmington's place; the Marquess of Tweeddale, as Secretary of Scotland, where the Duke of Argyll should have been; and Lord Winchilsea, as First Lord of the Admiralty, an utterly indefensible appointment.<sup>1</sup> From such a conglomerate it is no wonder that Chesterfield held aloof. He had no need, nor was he inclined, to sell himself; and if he did, it should not be for such a price as that of being included in a Government which was discredited before it even took its seat on the Treasury bench. Better far the position, as yet uncompromised, which remained to him at the head of a new Opposition composed of all the younger and more energetic Tories, augmented by some recruits from the ranks of Walpole's supporters. Here, if he might not hope for the spoils of war, he could at least escape the disgrace of the defeat which bad organization and incompetent leadership made inevitable.

It was not long until the new Opposition had the chance of making its presence felt. The country had been lashed into a fury against the late Prime Minister. The leading counties and chief towns sent representations to their members, demanding the impeachment of Walpole; and on 9 March, Lord Limerick moved for a secret committee to inquire into the administration of Sir Robert during the last twenty years.<sup>1</sup> Through the instrumentality of Pulteney it was rejected by a majority of two, only to be brought forward again on the 23rd of the same month, with the slight alteration of ten years for twenty, and was carried by a majority of seven votes. The committee was then appointed, but displayed such indecent rancour and unfairness in its initiatory proceedings that many of its members withdrew in disgust, whilst the witnesses examined before it refused to answer, lest their replies should in-

<sup>1</sup> Mahon's *History*, vol. III, pp. 172-3.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.



criminate themselves. This created an *impasse* which it was attempted to rectify by introducing a Bill for granting to every witness a remission of all penalties and punishments to which he might become liable by his disclosures, and this measure was readily passed by the Commons. In the Upper House, however, its progress was stayed by Carteret, who, formerly the accuser of Walpole, now stood forth as his advocate, being probably influenced to this course not so much by his own generosity as by the wishes of his sovereign. His speech was a masterpiece which evoked compliments from both sides of the House; and in opposing him Chesterfield paid a well-deserved tribute to its merit, but none the less did he himself endeavour with might and main to destroy its effect. He exerted all his powers in defence of the Bill, urging every argument and precedent he could think of in its support, and against the suspicion that the indemnity offered might prove an encouragement to false testimony, whilst he scouted the notion that there was any unfairness in choosing as the moment for attack that in which the object of the attack was divested of all his powers. "This is no time for criminal indulgence," he declared. "To be out of place is not necessarily to be out of power. A Minister may retain his influence who has resigned his appointments; he may still retain the favour of his Prince, and possess him with a false opinion that he can only secure his own authority by protecting him; or, what there is an equal reason to suspect, his successor may be afraid of concurring in a law which may hereafter be revived against him."<sup>1</sup> This double thrust was both skilful and effective; in fact it was the most dexterous stroke of any in that hot debate, but it dealt no mortal wound, for the House adopted the view of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, "that the Bill was calculated to make a defence impossible, to deprive innocence of its guard, to dazzle the wicked with

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 201.

a prospect of security, and to incite them to purchase an indemnity for one crime by the perpetration of another"; and it was rejected by a large majority.<sup>1</sup> Another Bill introduced professedly to secure trade and navigation in case of war, but really with the object of inculcating the late Government and placing restraints upon the new Board of Admiralty, met with a precisely similar fate. The House of Commons, or at least that portion of it hostile to Walpole, was furious at these rebuffs. A resolution was moved that these proceedings of the Peers were "an obstruction to justice," and there was every prospect of a collision between the two Houses, had not the Government, by opposing this motion, secured its rejection. Finally, when just at the close of the session (30 June) the Secret Committee issued its second report, the only charges which it brought against Walpole were found to be so insignificant that they excited ridicule and were received by the public with contempt. Chesterfield, soon realizing the hopelessness of the position which he had taken up, lost no time in abandoning it, and retired to Bath with the view of recruiting his health by one of those annual "half-repairs" which, as he told his physician, Dr. Cheyne, were "all that his shattered tenement would now admit of." In his absence things went better with the new Government. The nation, having cooled down, changed its mood and resolved to give them a fair trial; and when the next session opened, granted them supplies with no sparing hand. Things turned out well for them abroad too. The Queen of Hungary, Maria Theresa, had applied the men and money which they placed at her disposal with eminent success. Her dominions were cleared of both French, Austrians, and Spaniards; whilst the British navy retrieved its reputation, and, by blocking up the French and Spanish fleets in Toulon, secured for the time being the empire of the sea. Success begat over-

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 184.

confidence. Lord Stair, who was afterwards appointed Field-Marshal of all His Majesty's Forces, became intoxicated with the idea of an expedition to Paris, starting from the Netherlands; and the King, whose military ardour was his noblest attribute, longed to be at the head of a confederate army organized for the purpose. His own Hanoverian troops being, to His Majesty's thinking, the best in the world, he resolved that the new army would be imperfect without them. Accordingly 16,000 Hanoverians were promptly taken into British pay. This step of the King proved unfortunate for his Government. Chesterfield was not the man to let slip an opportunity of attacking his favourite bugbear—the Electorate; and on the opening of the session, when the usual address of thanks was proposed, he opposed the motion with vigour. To a great extent he had the country on his side; as the undisguised partiality of the King for his German home, and the national dislike of spending English money and English blood in continental struggles which affected Great Britain only remotely, if they concerned the interests of Hanover, was sufficiently pronounced. Still, Carteret managed to carry the House with him, and the motion for the address was agreed to. But at the beginning of the next year Earl Stanhope moved for another address, of which the purport was to beseech and advise His Majesty that he, in compassion to his people loaded already with such enormous and heavy taxes, such large and growing debts, and greater expenses than the nation at any time before had sustained, would exonerate his subjects of the charge and burden of those mercenaries who were taken into the service last year without the advice or consent of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> The motion was hotly supported by the Earl of Sandwich and the Duke of Bedford, and as warmly resisted by Pulteney, the new Earl of Bath, whom Chesterfield was put up to answer, which he did very

<sup>1</sup> Smollett, vol. XI, p. 140.

effectively. He dwelt upon the rashness of assembling an army in Flanders without the concurrence of the States-General; upon the danger of such a precedent as taking 16,000 foreign mercenaries into British pay without consulting Parliament; he pointed out that the arms and wealth of Britain alone were insufficient for the purpose contemplated, and that the Electorate of Hanover, though governed by the same ruler and bound by the same engagements, did not contribute anything to the enterprise, but was paid by this country an exorbitant price for such forces as it sent into the field, which were, moreover, not wanted, as we had a numerous army lying inactive at home. So far he had the House with him; but when he ventured to indulge in a reflection upon the Crown itself, which, however merited, was hardly decent, he damaged his own cause. "It may be proper," he added, "to repeat what may be forgotten in the multitude of other objects, that this nation, after having exalted the Elector of Hanover from a state of obscurity to the Crown, is condemned to hire the troops of that Electorate to fight their own cause; to hire them at a rate which was never demanded before; and to pay levy-money for them, though it was known to all Europe that they were not raised for this occasion." Such an indecorous attack upon the throne had exactly the opposite effect to what he aimed at. All the partisans of the old Ministry joined in opposing the motion, and it was accordingly lost on a division. Four-and-twenty peers, however, signed a protest against the address of approval which followed; and in heading the list of signatories Chesterfield appended to that document a statement of the reasons which had influenced him. Further, he appealed from the House to the country at large in what is the best known of his many political writings, a pamphlet bearing the title of *The Case of the Hanover Forces*. It was trenchant, logical, and witty enough to hit the popular taste, and attained



VOLTAIRE AND Mlle. CLAIRON

*From a rare contemporary French engraving in the Collection of A. M. Broadley, Esq.*



a wide circulation, which was not altogether a *succès d'estime*, though the combative Earl had risen vastly in public estimation by the fearlessness with which, regardless of consequences to himself, he attacked those who were really responsible for the burdens that oppressed the country.<sup>1</sup> What feeling so irascible a monarch as George II entertained towards his old favourite by this time may be readily conceived; but the extent to which he was influenced by the popular excitement which Chesterfield's efforts had provoked is evinced in what was, for him, a very unusual way. To silence the objection that England was simply the milch-cow of Hanover, he actually supplemented the 16,000 Hanoverians already referred to with 6000 men paid from his own Electoral revenues; an act of generosity which, if it did not lighten their own burdens, mightily consoled his English subjects.

But Carteret's administration soon had fresh troubles. The Gin Act of 1731, as Walpole foretold, had proved a failure; so the Ministers brought in a new Bill which they hoped would at the same time discourage drinking and increase the revenue. It was hurried through the Commons; but met with a most vigorous resistance in the Lords, where Chesterfield surpassed himself in denouncing it. Lord Mahon remarks that "his two speeches on this question, inadequately as they were reported, may yet attract our admiration, and have seldom been surpassed as combinations of lively wit and impressive forebodings."<sup>2</sup> They were, however, unsuccessful, though he had the support of the Episcopal Bench; and the Bill passed by a large majority. The case for it was indeed too strong

<sup>1</sup> In his private conversation he was still less scrupulous, as one of his *bons mots* current at the time shows. Being one day in the House of Peers before the sitting had commenced, he told some of the lords around that he had found out a way to get rid of the Pretender once and for all, and this, he explained, was by humbly requesting His Majesty to resign Hanover to that adventurer, "for," said he, "it is certain that England would never again choose a King from *that* place."—Maty.

<sup>2</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 214.

for it to be effectually resisted. The Act of 1731 had completely failed to stop the evils which it was intended to remedy, as neither the people nor the revenue officers, nor the magistrates, could be induced to carry out its provisions. Though no licence was obtained, and no duty paid, the liquor continued to be sold at every street corner so cheaply that the lowest class of the people could afford to indulge in it to excess, to the destruction of morals, industry, and order. Painted boards were set up in public, inviting people to be "drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and have straw for nothing" in the wretched cellars to which they were conveyed when helpless from intoxication. It may therefore, at first, seem unaccountable that Chesterfield, and still more wonderful that the bishops, should have opposed what was *primâ facie* intended to remedy such a disgraceful state of things. But the reason is not far to seek. Ministers were suspected to aim, by imposing a small duty and fixing the price of licences at a nominal sum, not so much at diminishing the consumption of spirits, as at providing a revenue for the expenses of the war which was just being entered upon; and the introduction of the measure at this particular time lent colour to the suspicion. When, therefore, Chesterfield, in the course of his first speech, suggested that the following preamble should be prefixed to the Bill, it was natural enough that the bishops should side with him: "Whereas the designs of the present Ministry, whatever they are, cannot be executed without a great number of mercenaries, which mercenaries cannot be hired without money; and whereas the present disposition of this nation to drunkenness inclines us to believe that they will pay more cheaply for the undisturbed enjoyment of distilled liquors than for any other concession that can be made by the Government; be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty that no man shall hereafter be denied the right of being drunk on the following conditions." The speaker's



my lord

aferne  
1761

cherie

give me leave to apply from  
alps to the english nobles, and  
is the most adapted to the ta-  
nation. I have in my or-  
conformity with you tion  
but in point of ears mine these  
too the consolation of the  
to read, and sometimes to care to  
a scribler, made a pre-  
tary on many tragedies and eyes  
my duty since the gran  
cornelle is in my house, when  
if there was a gran Dai-attaché  
Shakespeare, I would:

a letter in Holbein how worthy from him to the  
Card of Chesterfield

mylord

aferney par geneve 5 augu.  
1765

give me leave to apply from the foot of the  
alps to the english nobleman whose wit  
is the most adapted to the taste of every  
nation. I have in my old age a sort of  
conformity with you 'tis not in point of wit,  
but in point of ears mine are much heard  
too the consolation of deaf people is  
to read, and sometimes to scribble. I have  
a a scribbler, made a pretty curious commen-  
tary on many tragedies of cornielle. 'tis  
my duty 'since the gran daughter of  
cornielle is in my house  
if there was a gran daughter of  
Shakespear, I would subscribe for her

I hope those who take your notice  
will take subscription too  
the work is prodigiously cheap, and  
no money is to be given but at the  
reception of the book.  
—  
Monsieur receives the names of these  
Subscribers y<sup>r</sup> name will be the  
most honourable and the dearest to  
me.

I wish y<sup>r</sup> lordship long life, good eyes  
and good stomack.

mylord Souvenez vous de m'embrasser  
Votre serviteur Voltaire qui vous s'attache  
comme il doit ne s'aloigner

peculiar humour was further shown by his remark when, upon the question being put for considering the Bill, he saw the bishops join his division. "I am in doubt," said he, "whether I have not got on the other side of the question; for I have not had the honour to divide with so many lawn-sleeves for several years."

Though the Government had succeeded, its credit was so much shaken by the exposure of its motives that it may be doubted whether the honours of war did not rest with Chesterfield and his party. It is not always by winning battles that campaigns are decided; and the consciousness that each successive victory left the other side weaker, whilst his own resources were steadily increasing, stimulated the Earl to fresh efforts. It was upon him that the brunt of the fighting fell, although the Duke of Argyll was nominally in command; and whilst not without adventitious aid from irregular auxiliaries, such as Hervey, who panted to avenge real or fancied wrongs at the hand of Government, the bulk of his own following were men of very moderate ability. Still, the little party, such as it was, rapidly gained the confidence of the country, which saw that Carteret had forsaken all his principles and become a creature of the Crown, whilst Pulteney had forfeited the popular suffrage by his fatal acceptance of a title. Hence the public watched with sympathy the unremitting hostility of Chesterfield and his allies, and applauded every fresh effort on their part to embarrass a ministry already so weakened that it may be said to have been only upheld by the quavering arm of that human paradox, the Duke of Newcastle. Opportunities for assault are rarely wanting to those who are always on the look out for them; and a new one was furnished by the report of the Secret Committee which had been appointed to investigate the conduct of Walpole. By that report it appeared that the late Minister had commenced prosecutions against the mayors of boroughs

who opposed his influence in the election of members of Parliament, which prosecutions were founded upon certain practically obsolete clauses in the ancient charters.<sup>1</sup> These prosecutions were an undoubted abuse of power, but the Courts of Law had upheld them, and the Opposition now brought forward a motion for leave to introduce a Bill for securing the future independence of corporations in the matter of elections. This proposal did not commend itself to the Ministry, as it tended to diminish Government influence, and as the Bill was very badly drawn the law officers made short work of it. Lord Hardwicke, allowing that it was fundamentally right, insisted that a great danger lay in the remedy which it proposed. Lord Chesterfield answered with some force that, seeing the grievance was admitted, if the remedy proposed were unsuitable, another might and ought to be devised; but, as Dr. Maty sagely observes, "notwithstanding his lordship's efforts, it seemed to be at last allowed on all sides that, although the evil complained of was real, yet it was perhaps one of those it became the legislative power to wink at, or not attempt to cure radically till the abuse should prove considerable enough to require it."<sup>2</sup> At all events, the motion was rejected on a division; and shortly after the session was brought to a close, leaving the Government still masters of all their positions, but in reality having suffered to an extent that augured ill for the ultimate result.

The events which followed when the "Pragmatic Army," as it was termed—composed of an equal number of British and Hanoverian troops with a small body of Austrian, the whole being under Lord Stair—encountered the superior forces of the French, unhappily afforded sufficient grounds for criticism to those who had previously denounced the expedition which had led to so much controversy in Parliament. Lord Stair's plans were neutralised by the opposi-

<sup>1</sup> Smollett, vol. XI, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, p. 212.

tion of ministers at home as well as by that of the foreign generals under him, and he was forced to act upon the defensive, contrary to his own inclination and the dictates of expediency. Everything went wrong; and when King George, accompanied by the Duke of Cumberland, arrived to assume the command, matters did not improve. To extricate his army from a disadvantageous position, the King was forced to retreat through the defile of Dettingen, which Marshal Noailles, the French general, had taken care to render as difficult as possible. Fortunately, the Marshal was badly served by his subordinates, and Grammont's premature attack led to the disorganization of his well-laid scheme by bringing on a general action in which, as all know, King George proved victorious, and which it was thought might have ended in the destruction of the French army if the success had been properly followed up. That it was not, formed the subject of much trouble to the Government afterwards, though there is considerable doubt as to whether Lord Stair's urgent entreaties for a pursuit, considering the exhausted state of our troops, might not have led to disaster if carried out.<sup>1</sup> At all events, the army continued its retreat with such haste as to abandon its wounded to the mercy of the French. Lord Stair was so disgusted at the rejection of his advice that he resigned, his example being followed by the Duke of Marlborough and several other officers, all of whom, on their return to England, denounced the conduct of the campaign with a freedom that was not long in producing its effect upon the country. To the indignation kindled thereby fresh fuel was soon added by the discomfiture of our foreign policy which ensued. A chance was offered of terminating the

<sup>1</sup> The history of the battle of Dettingen was succinctly summed up by Lord Stair himself in an answer to Voltaire, whom he met at The Hague a few weeks after that engagement: "I think," said he, "that the French made one great mistake, and the English two; yours was not standing still; our first, entangling ourselves in a most perilous position; our second, failing to pursue our victory."—Mahon, vol. III, p. 226.

war by a reconciliation between the Emperor of Austria and our expensive ally, the Queen of Hungary. The Emperor would have granted almost any terms with the view of effecting it; and had we pressed Maria Theresa to accept them, she must have consented. Unfortunately we did the very opposite. The Emperor's advances were haughtily rejected; those of the French were no better received. New treaties were concluded which, if they gained additional support for the Queen, threw additional burdens on us, and excited the jealous resentment of the other powers. Thus the most favourable chance of terminating an unpopular and expensive war was thrown away, whilst at the same time the war itself was being conducted in such a manner as to bring us neither glory nor profit. Small wonder, therefore, if the Cabinet had to face a very indignant tribunal at the next opening of Parliament; or that Chesterfield threw himself into the opening thus afforded with even more than his usual determination. Taking advantage of the circumstance that the King, as having commanded in the recent campaign, was virtually upon his trial, he almost singled the monarch out for attack with an audacity which appals even his biographer, whilst he guarded himself from the imputation of disrespect by drawing a distinction between *behaviour* and *conduct* which enabled him to censure the management of the campaign under the form of a panegyric on the bravery of its royal leader. But the chief object of his attack, as well as of Pitt's in the Lower House, was Carteret, to whom was now transferred all the unpopularity of Walpole.

It was believed by most people that in the recent negotiations Carteret had sacrificed all considerations to the single object of securing the personal favour of the King.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, he had forfeited all his popu-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Granville's maxim was: "Give any man the Crown on his side and he can defy everything."—Mahon, vol. III, p. 276 *n*. On the other hand, the King used to bewail: "Ministers are the King in this country."—*Ibid.*, p. 280.

larity, whilst his power in the Cabinet was much diminished by a recent change at the Treasury. Lord Wilmington, who had merely acted as his factotum there, died rather suddenly; and chiefly by Walpole's influence with the King, Henry Pelham, brother to the Duke of Newcastle, was appointed to fill the vacancy, and to undertake the management of the House of Commons. He was a weak but conscientious Minister, whose want of capacity was in some measure supplied by the lucky circumstances that soon gathered round him a band of more or less powerful supporters. There was, first of all, his own brother, the Duke of Newcastle—that extraordinary being who, despite his oddities, was one of the most resourceful statesmen of his time; next, two members of the Cabinet, Lords Gower and Cobham, having retired in disgust at finding that the Hanoverian troops would still be retained, he was enabled to fill their places with his own friends;<sup>1</sup> then two of the most prominent chiefs of the new Opposition, the Duke of Argyll and Lord Hervey, were removed by death, and he was further able to find places for his friends, Henry Fox and Lord Middlesex; while he bestowed the Paymaster-ship of the Forces, vacant by his own elevation, on Winnington, and gratified Sandys, whom he had displaced at the Exchequer, with a peerage and a place in the royal household. These changes were very gradual, but the upshot was that, except as regards the management of foreign affairs—the most odious responsibility of all—Carteret's power became reduced to a minimum; whilst, owing to the continued employment of Hanoverian mercenaries, the King himself had grown so unpopular that his support was rather a source of weakness than of strength. When, therefore, owing to the deaths of Argyll and Hervey, the whole brunt of attack devolved upon Lord Chesterfield, it was against a sadly enfeebled enemy he took the field, and the daring of his confidence rose in

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 236.

proportion. Whilst the changes alluded to were in progress, his powers as a formidable adversary had been recognized by the admission of the Ministerialists themselves. During the fierce debates about continuing the Hanoverian troops in British pay after the expiration of the term for which they had been hired, Horace Walpole (brother of Lord Orford) inveighed in the House of Commons against the pamphlet called the *Case of the Hanover Forces*;<sup>1</sup> from which he said the speakers on the other side, and Mr. Pitt in particular, derived their principal arguments—a very distinguished compliment to the person who wrote it. In truth, although history has somehow contrived to ignore the fact, there was then no more prominent political figure in Great Britain, and certainly none so prominent in the House of Lords, as the great orator and statesman and controversialist, whose reputation now chiefly rests upon a bundle of letters, was at that period. His name is always coupled, as a speaker, with that of Pitt; and, so far as his fellow-peers were concerned, not to the advantage of the latter.<sup>2</sup> Outside Parliament he was known to the country as perhaps the only man in it who had not his price; and one who was prepared to denounce without fear or favour any abuse by whomsoever committed; as a great noble who had the highly popular merit of living well up to his position; and whilst taking his pleasure pretty freely, as having more regard to the ordinary rules of decency than was usual with coevals of his station; as the associate on equal terms of those whose only distinction was their genius; as a man who could hold his own in any company and against any competitor; and moreover, as one who

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 217 n.

<sup>2</sup> The great Earl of Chatham's style of oratory did not find a congenial atmosphere in the Upper House, where it was judged, and not altogether without reason, as being too declamatory. On the other hand, Horace Walpole, who had heard all the best speakers of the time, gives Chesterfield the credit of making "the best speech he had ever listened to."



did not spare himself when there was work to be done. The contrast between such a man and the renegade minister who had bartered his principles for the smile of an unpopular sovereign was so patent, that it did not need the stimulus of a busy contemporary literature to enforce it; and whilst few great names were spared in that irreverent age, Chesterfield's was usually mentioned with a fair amount of respect.<sup>1</sup>

The Government were afforded a brief respite by the threatened project of a Jacobite invasion of England and Scotland by the Young Pretender, which the French now contemplated. Patriotism served to unite men of all parties, for the time being, around the throne. There was now no more talk of disbanding the army, or dispensing with the Hanoverians. Although Carteret did not flinch, the rest of the Ministers were less confident, while the unstable Duke of Newcastle changed his views completely; and made no secret of the fact that he was now just as much opposed to the Hanoverian mercenaries as a few months before he had been in their favour; and his brother, Henry Pelham, would have followed suit, but that Walpole, or as we should now call him, the Earl of Orford, rushed up to town from his country retreat to prevent him and his colleagues from taking steps which would have involved an unpardonable insult to their royal master. It was solely owing to his remonstrances that the Minister did not yield to popular outcry.<sup>2</sup> Even Pitt and Chesterfield held their peace. The Duke of Marlborough, who had so lately resigned in disgust, moved a loyal address in the House

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated Johnson letter, which belongs to a later period, was the outcome of wounded personal vanity, and forms no real exception to the above statement. As already mentioned, the lenity with which Chesterfield is treated, in the caricatures and the ephemeral literature of the time, is a convincing proof of his popularity.

<sup>2</sup> "The whole world, nay the Prince himself, allows that if Lord Orford had not come to town the Hanover troops had been lost."—H. Walpole to Sir H. Mann, 24 January, 1744.

of Peers; the Earl of Stair placed his services at the disposal of Government, and was appointed Commander-in-Chief. Supplies were voted to the extent of ten millions sterling; in fact, all political differences were sunk in presence of the common danger. But the lull proved only temporary. In the very midst of this patriotic accord a Bill was brought in by the Opposition which, however loyal on the face of it, proved to be the means of disturbing the general harmony. It provided amply that the penalties which had been imposed on treasonable correspondence with the Old Pretender should extend to correspondence with his children; and in that shape it readily passed the Commons. But on its reaching the Upper House, the Lord Chancellor proposed the insertion of two additional clauses, one of which was to extend the penalties of the Act to the posterity of those who should be convicted under it during the lifetime of both Pretenders.<sup>1</sup> Such a vindictive attempt to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children roused the indignation of just men in both Houses. Lord Chesterfield especially denounced it in the Press with an eloquence and dignity worthy of all praise. "I hope," said he in one passage, "to be heard with more attention as I cannot be suspected of any private views or imagined to speak with any other motive than conviction. I have no children to excite my tenderness, or turn me aside from the most rigid justice"; and, after dwelling upon the arguments which should weigh with those who were more fortunate in this respect than himself, he rose into the passionate appeal: "Let us not, my lords, make ourselves infamous to our posterity by bequeathing them a law which must keep them in perpetual alarms, and which will give wickedness so much advantage over virtue."<sup>2</sup> Let us not break through all the

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> Alluding to the danger of interested or hostile parties taking advantage of the Act from personal motives.—Maty, p. 222.

rules of morality only to ensure liberty. If we must offer incense to the throne let us offer it at our own expense, that posterity may rather ridicule our folly than curse our wickedness; and let us resolve not to prostitute the power with which the virtue of our ancestors has invested us, to the destruction of those who, in time, will count us among their progenitors—but with this difference, that as *we* may reflect with veneration and gratitude upon that courage and honesty by which we are ennobled, *they* will mention with shame and contempt that cowardice and flattery with which they are enslaved.” Eloquent as was the protest, it had no more success than that of Pitt in the Lower House. A learned bishop (Secker) supported the Chancellor’s arguments by quoting scriptural precedent for hereditary punishment, and this combination of legal and spiritual authority outweighed Chesterfield’s remonstrance; but the country laid up all these things in its heart.

The fortunes of both Chesterfield and Carteret were affected by certain events which befell at the close of the year. Owing to the death of his mother, the Countess of Granville, Carteret succeeded to the family estate, and became Earl Granville; while Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, dying at the age of eighty-five, left substantial tokens of her esteem to Chesterfield. After making provision in the codicil<sup>1</sup> to her will for the compilation of a history of her celebrated husband by the well-known authors, Glover and Mallet, that document recites: “And as I have been extremely obliged to the Earl of Chesterfield, who never had any call to give himself trouble about me, I believe that he will comply with my very earnest request, which is that he will direct the two persons above

<sup>1</sup> By the same codicil a legacy of £10,000 was given to the elder Pitt, “upon account of his merit in the noble defence he has made for the support of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country,” together with landed property in Bucks, Stafford, and Northampton. The will and codicil of the Duchess of Marlborough covered twelve “skins” of parchment, of which four were devoted to the codicil.

named"; and further, "I give to Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, out of the great regard I have for his merit and the infinite obligations I have received from him, my best and largest brilliant diamond ring and the sum of Twenty thousand pounds," with the additional provision, "I give and devise to the said Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, his heirs executors and assigns, according to the nature of the estates respectively, any estate and interest undisposed of by my said will, in and to my manor of Wimbledon, in the county of Surrey, and all my freehold and leasehold lands and hereditaments at Wimbledon aforesaid; and also in and to my Manor lands and hereditaments in the county of Northampton, late the estate of Sir William Norwich, Bart.; and also in and to my manor lands and hereditaments in the county of Surrey, late the estate of Richard Holditch, Esq.: and it is my desire that the furniture of Wimbledon House go to the said Earl of Chesterfield therewith." The "merit" which obtained this satisfactory recognition no doubt was his able and unflinching support of a cause which Her Grace had much at heart. She had been a consistent opponent to Walpole; and when upon the downfall of that minister, "the Patriots," as she phrased it, "joined with the Crown," when Carteret and Pulteney had deserted their colours, his remaining in Opposition won her regard; the "obligations" being many little kindnesses he had rendered to the old woman, especially as regards those literary undertakings in which she required the assistance of an adept. It was he who had recommended Mr. Hooke as a fit and proper person to undertake the preparation of her *Conduct*, a work for which the lucky scribe was most handsomely remunerated;<sup>1</sup> and though it was to her friends Lords Stair and Marchmont that she chiefly looked for assistance in

<sup>1</sup> She paid him £5000. For the projected *Life* of her husband Glover and Mallet were only proffered £500, a price which was not thought enough to tempt the former, and the work fell through.



*Sir Godfrey Kneller Pinxt.*

*—Hinchliff Sculp<sup>t</sup>*

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH



the disposal of her enormous wealth, she seems to have preferred his counsel in those more delicate transactions affecting "family matters."

Small advantage accrued to Earl Granville from his coronet. His supporters might now be said to have been reduced to one—the King; and as the latter had quarrelled with all his other ministers, both were practically helpless. Perhaps of the two the King was the worse off, as he was the less independent, and felt his position much more acutely than the light-hearted minister. He was obliged to forego his annual visit to Hanover that year (1744), as the Cabinet opposed it. Moreover, they declined to make certain payments which he was anxious to secure for other German principalities. "I wish Saxony could be assisted with a sum of money," he remarked piteously to the Lord Chancellor. "Upon which," says Lord Hardwicke, "I took the liberty of reminding him that the large and additional subsidy which he had already granted to the Queen of Hungary made this impracticable. The King made no reply, but pulled some papers out of his pocket; so I made my bow." But His Majesty, though silent, showed by his manner how deeply he resented the refusal; and the estrangement between the Court and the Ministers became so pronounced that it almost drove the poor Duke of Newcastle to distraction. "I think I can see by the air of the Court and the courtiers," he writes, "a greater shyness towards us, or at least towards me, than I have ever yet observed. I am of opinion that the King thinks, at present, he has nothing more to hope from us, and nothing to fear." Granville was haughtily defiant. He told the Pelhams that things could not remain as they were; that he could not submit to be overruled and outvoted; that they might take the Government upon them if they pleased; but that if they did not, he would insist upon governing himself. The Duke and his brother were in a sore strait; they dreaded the risk, but eventually

decided that they had no choice. So, early in November, they informed the King, on behalf of themselves and their colleagues, that His Majesty must choose between their resignation and the dismissal of Earl Granville. Great was the King's dismay. He besought advice from his staunch friend the Earl of Orford, who sadly declared that "Granville must go," and the King, seeing there was no help for it, gave way. Granville accordingly resigned; but the King was resolved that neither of the Pelhams should have his place,<sup>1</sup> and the seals were given to his predecessor, the Earl of Harrington.

Thus fell what, from the convivial habits of Carteret and his friends, was popularly known as "the drunken administration"; and now had come, to all appearance, the time when Chesterfield was to reap the fruit of his labours. He was the acknowledged head of the "Broad-bottomed Party"—a coalition which had grown out of a process of fusion which had for some time been going on between the Pelham section of the Ministry and the Opposition. Both had the same object in view, namely the cessation of a war that was draining the resources of the country without the prospect of any adequate return for such sacrifices; and that would be succeeded by the exclusive employment of British forces in carrying on the struggle. It was therefore recognized that Chesterfield could hardly be excluded from any administration that might be formed; but here a difficulty presented itself. How was His Majesty, who hated, and had some cause to hate, that nobleman with all the force of his obstinate nature, to be prevailed upon to accept him? It proved insurmountable: Chesterfield reaped as he had sown. His claim to be Secretary of State was unquestioned, but the King

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 277. The King ascribed the whole blame of what had occurred to the Duke of Newcastle, who in His Majesty's own words, "is grown as jealous of Lord Granville as he had been of Lord Orford, and wants to be Prime Minister, which, a puppy! how should he be?"—Walpole to Sir H. Mann, 26 November, 1744.





*Ravenet Sculp.*

EARL GRANVILLE



absolutely declined to have a man who, in open Parliament, had almost burlesqued his foreign extraction; attacked his military reputation; accused him of jobbery; slandered his Electorate, maligned the efficiency of his Hanoverian troops, and who, in particular, incited his son to disobedience; insulted his wife, and overthrown his favourite Minister, and had actually threatened him with litigation<sup>1</sup>—in a position where they must frequently be brought into contact; so that his inclusion in the Cabinet seemed impossible. Still, it was just as difficult to exclude him; he must be utilized and provided for in some way; and the only means of doing so which presented itself was to give him some high office, suited to his rank and ability, which would not necessitate personal interviews between his royal master and himself. Fortunately, an opportunity for effecting this for a time was presented by the need just then of an Ambassador to Holland, who was likely to have sufficient influence with the States-General to secure more effective Dutch co-operation with Great Britain in the future conduct of the war;<sup>2</sup> and the reputation which Chesterfield had acquired during his previous embassy; his knowledge of Dutch politics and statesmen; and insinuating manners and skilful address, made him pre-eminently suited for the post. But this was not enough: the appointment by its very nature was only temporary, and the difficulty of providing for him when it should terminate would still remain. Once more, a solution was hit upon. Chesterfield had long been credited with a desire to grapple with that hitherto insoluble problem, the Irish question: why, then, not give him the Viceroyalty? He could take up that office on the completion of his task

<sup>1</sup> In the matter of the property bequeathed by George I to the Duchess of Kendal.

<sup>2</sup> A quadruple alliance had just been concluded (January, 1745) between England, Holland, Austria, and Saxony; but it was especially difficult for the phlegmatic Hollanders to give that active and practical sympathy which the occasion required.

at The Hague; and in neither post would there be any danger of a collision between him and outraged Majesty. The King gave a grumbling assent to both proposals: provided the man were only kept at a distance, he did not much care what became of him; and as the Earl knew perfectly well that he would be likely to have an uncomfortable time if he took office at home, he raised no objection, though he made no secret of his regarding the acceptance as a concession on his part.<sup>1</sup> So the matter was settled. So Chesterfield was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland at once; but previous to taking up that appointment, was to proceed as Ambassador to The Hague. It was not by any means an adequate reward for the years of hard fighting in a cause of which the ultimate success was due mainly to himself; but he had the consolation of knowing that the public regarded him as pre-eminently qualified for the conduct of those delicate negotiations upon which so much depended; whilst, as regards the Irish appointment, one of his own cherished fancies was being gratified; and at the same time, as he probably calculated, the Viceroyalty would afford opportunities whereby the tension between himself and his sovereign might be gradually relaxed. In the present state of the King's feelings, the sooner he was out of the way the better; so he started at once for The Hague with a very small retinue, arriving there on 11 January, 1745. In regard to his mission it is only necessary to say that it succeeded beyond expectation. The Dutch refused him nothing, upon paper, undertaking that they would put fifty thousand men in the field, besides ten thousand in their garrisons, and that the Duke of Cumberland, who was to command the British forces in the projected campaign, should be appointed Commander-in-Chief of

<sup>1</sup> "His lordship told me once," writes Dr. Chevenix, "that many lies had been told of him to the King, and with such circumstance he was not surprised that His Majesty believed them." How ingenuous!

the whole confederate army. If they did not exactly fulfil these magnificent promises, that was none of his fault. He bore himself well throughout the difficult negotiations, in which he had to contend against the French and Spanish Ambassadors, getting decidedly the better of both; and eight days after the battle of Fontenoy, took leave of the States-General in a speech which skilfully portrayed the advantages likely to arise from the close union of the Dutch and British nations; whilst, in their letter to his sovereign upon the occasion of his departure, their High Mightinesses recorded their esteem for the talents, abilities, and prudence of so eminent a negotiator. Once more Chesterfield had acquitted himself well of the work that was set him to do; and it was with a greatly enhanced reputation that he prepared to enter upon the still more formidable task that awaited him. He was aware, and made no secret of the fact, that his acceptance of the Irish Viceroyalty was a concession on his part; so much so that when the King hesitated to accept his nomination of Dr. Chevenix for a vacant Irish bishopric, he gave His Majesty to understand that, if the request was not complied with, another viceroy must be sought; and the Doctor got his preferment<sup>1</sup> without further parley. No event of importance marked the interval that elapsed before he took up the duties of his new office, if we except the death of his old opponent, the Earl of Orford;<sup>2</sup> and upon 31 August, 1745, he landed upon the shores of that unhappy country where the memory of his too brief stay was long cherished by a population that remained orderly and happy under his firm yet beneficent sway. That the approaching trouble of "The '45" had a good deal to do with his appointment is quite possible, though there is little ground for supposing that it was taken much into consideration at the time.

<sup>1</sup> He was appointed Bishop of Killaloe in May, 1745.

<sup>2</sup> In March, 1745, after a most painful illness heroically borne.

His leave-taking was peculiar. In conversation with his friend Lord Marchmont, Chesterfield explained the motives which led him to decline a more active share in the Government for himself, although he was personally dispensing places to others. He said that he had chosen the Irish Viceroyalty partly because, as the Duke of Shrewsbury observed, it was a place wherein a man had business enough to hinder him from falling asleep, and not so much as to keep him awake;<sup>1</sup> partly because he wanted to have it in his power to do for "little people who were attached to him and had suffered for him"; partly, because it gave him an entry into the royal closet either frequently or once in six weeks, as he found it convenient, since it was a Cabinet place. Moreover, he believed that from his having rejected at once Carteret's proposal, he had established a confidence with the old Minister, who would be glad of his help . . . though he should have only *voix au chapitre*; that he could not now have had the seals (i.e. become Secretary of State) without risking all for them; and "that he must have come into the closet through thorns and briars, with his face all scratched; whereas he chose to strew his way with roses." This manner of putting things is eminently characteristic of a man who uniformly disclaimed all motives for his conduct which were not founded upon the most absolute selfishness, whilst never failing to carry out the work set before him with an ardour of self-sacrifice that was perhaps unexampled among his compeers.

<sup>1</sup> It is hard to see the grounds for this cheerful forecast, as Ireland had long been in a condition requiring very careful management. For example, in 1714, an election *émeute*—the discredit of which was on very insufficient grounds attributed to the Roman Catholics, had led to the closing of many of their places of worship; a measure which, however deeply resented by the mass of the population, had to be endured, as resistance was hopeless. Next, the prospect of a collision between both Houses of the Irish Parliament, arising out of the choice of a Speaker, followed by an attempt to remove a Lord Chancellor who was suspected of Jacobite proclivities, led to the drastic measure of proroguing Parliament *sine die*; and for the remainder of George I's reign Ireland was deprived of even the semblance of self-government.—Mahon, vol. I, p. 92.

## VII

### VICEROYALTY

**W**HEN Chesterfield assumed the Government of Ireland, that exhausted country happened to be in one of those lethargic intervals which often succeed periods of active unrest, and too often precede fresh outbursts of impatience. An Act, passed in 1719, for better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain,—which deprived the Irish House of Lords of all judicial power,—had inflicted a staggering blow upon its independence from which the country had not yet recovered; and, coupled with other repressive measures upon trade and industry, produced a sort of masked acquiescence in the then existing state of things as being hopeless of amendment. What that state was may easily be ascertained from sources familiar to all, and it is not our purpose to dwell upon them further than as they present themselves to our notice when recounting the steps which from time to time the new Viceroy felt bound to take with reference to them. But that the country was held in an iron grip by that section of its population which represented English ascendancy is proved by the acknowledged fact that, for many years before Chesterfield's arrival, the post of Lord-Lieutenant had been an absolute sinecure, and that he was the first Viceroy since the Revolution who made it one of active exertion. When Carteret held it (in 1724) the energy of Swift had indeed (on the introduction of "Wood's Patent"), by means of the *Drapier Letters*,

produced a temporary excitement; but this was soon quelled by the withdrawal of the Patent, and since then the Viceroy had been reduced to a mere figurehead. "What are you doing here?" said Swift to Carteret. "Go back to your own country, and let us have our noodles again." And quite recently the lazy Duke of Shrewsbury had given his already-quoted reason for accepting the office, "that it was a place where a man had business enough to hinder him from falling asleep, and not enough to keep him awake." But Chesterfield was a viceroy of a different stamp. He felt responsibility, he liked work, and he had long looked forward to this appointment as likely to provide him with an interesting occupation. Almost his first act on accepting office was to show that he, at any rate, meant to be no *fainéant* viceroy. The post of Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant had to be filled up, and before he left England there were many applicants for the vacancy, since it was not only a situation of considerable emolument, but under preceding viceroys one of very great power, as upon the secretary usually devolved the duties and patronage which should have been exercised by his principal. Rejecting several more or less distinguished candidates, Lord Chesterfield selected a youthful member of Parliament, named Lyddell, who, as he afterwards wrote, was "a very genteel, pretty young fellow, but not a man of business," and to him he said: "Sir, you will receive the emoluments of your place, but I will do the business myself, being determined to have no first minister."

In many respects Chesterfield was peculiarly qualified to rule the country in which his lot was now cast, and not the least of his qualifications was the absolute indifference, we will not say to religion, but to religious distinctions, which he shared with Voltaire.<sup>1</sup> To Protestantism as the State

<sup>1</sup> It should not be supposed, however, that Chesterfield's indifference to religious distinctions went beyond a certain point. In doctrinal variances he



religion, as the creed of the dominant race, and as therefore the creed representative of Law and Order, he resolutely adhered ; but to distinctive treatment of Protestants and Catholics on the ground of their respective religious convictions he was just as resolutely opposed ; and however obviously this may appear, as the duty of a governor, to us of the twentieth century, it was by no means so unquestionable to those who were responsible for the government of Ireland in the eighteenth. Protestantism was, then, virtually the force by which England held that country ; Roman Catholicism, the badge of disaffection. The distinction was no less political than theological, and a two-fold animosity, springing from politics and polemics, separated

neither was, nor affected to be, interested ; but so far as the distinction of churches trenched upon politics, no more bitter partisan was to be found on either side. He fully shared the conviction, then held by every patriotic Englishman, that Popery, in domination, was inconsistent with that freedom which is the basis of our constitution ; and though, as a matter of individual taste, he disliked the Hanoverian succession, and manifested this dislike without reserve, yet whenever that succession was threatened with attack by those whose interests were bound up with the Papacy, he rushed to its defence with all the ardour that could have been displayed by the most pious of churchmen. That Popery, as a power, must be kept out of these islands at all risks was to him as much an axiom as it was to Marlborough when the latter chose to incur the guilt of perfidy rather than to sacrifice his patriotism. The motives of both men have been misunderstood ; as (failing to bear in mind this double aspect of Popery, and observing the inconsistency of their lives with deep religious conviction) the world has branded them with insincerity. Neither was insincere in evincing a detestation of Popery—Marlborough possibly in both its aspects, Chesterfield only in one ; and a due recognition of this fact will lead to both receiving credit, instead of obloquy, for the course which each respectively pursued—Marlborough, by placing his allegiance to his country above that to his sovereign ; and Chesterfield, by sanctioning repressive measures against religionists when he himself attached so little abstract importance to religion. Here, too, we find an explanation of the inconsistency between the sternly repressive policy which the latter professed, and the tolerance which he practised. Once convinced that no political danger threatened Ireland from the disaffection of the Roman Catholic population, he desisted from all minatory action ; relaxed the iron grasp with which he had been prepared to crush revolt ; and adopting an attitude of impartial justice without reference to creed, endeavoured, so far as the circumstances of the time permitted, to place Catholics and Protestants upon an equal footing.

votaries of the respective creeds. As a natural consequence, oppression and injustice resulted from the circumstance that those who professed one of these creeds held dominant power over those who professed the other ; and whatever minor causes may have contributed to the discontent and disaffection which were Ireland's chronic maladies, this was the canker which, gnawing at the vitals of the country, kept by force the greater portion of its population in a state of chronic unrest, aggravated by sufferings that from time to time became intolerable. The English Government recognized the evil, but felt powerless to check it. Occasionally a half-hearted effort was made to stem the tide of Protestant ascendancy ;<sup>1</sup> but this was soon abandoned. The dominant creed, knowing its own importance, resented any attempt to lessen its power, and the Government, apprehensive of having to deal with a *wholly* discontented Ireland, gave way. Nor was this subjection of the Roman Catholic element merely political and official : it was also social. The Protestants almost monopolized the wealth and rank of the country, and in the process of subjugation had gradually absorbed everything. The property of those who professed the older faith and who, broadly speaking, represented the resisting element, had either by forfeiture or embarrassment gradually passed into the hands of the dominant religionists, as rewards for loyalty to the Government, or through process of law, until it is hardly too much to say that Protestants and Catholics corresponded respectively to the richer and poorer classes in other countries ; and as wealth implies power, this circumstance added considerably to the strength of Protestant ascendancy. Now, however lax in morals, or however indifferent to religious refinements, Chesterfield possessed a keen sense of equity and justice. No moralist, however strict ; no professing Christian, however philanthropic, had

<sup>1</sup> As when the Duke of Shrewsbury was instructed to "prevent a Protestant cry at the elections."—Mahon, vol. I, p. 91.

a more just appreciation of human rights, or a keener hatred of oppression, or a more hearty contempt for the arrogance that springs from the adventitious circumstances of superior birth, wealth, or position; and from the very outset he let it be clearly understood that, in matters of administration, the only distinction which he would recognize was that between the law-abiding and the actively disaffected. His maxim was, "The King's government must be carried on"; to this he would tolerate no opposition from Protestant or Catholic, from exalted official or from private citizen; but, provided that it was duly recognized, the humblest subject was sure of his protection. One or two instances of his impartiality may here be cited. At the time of his arrival in the country, there existed a strong apprehension that dangerous sympathy with the Pretender's rebellion in England and Scotland pervaded the subject element in Ireland; and he had, in fact, been sent for the purpose of checking the danger likely to ensue therefrom. Very soon a report reached him that a Roman Catholic gentleman living near Dublin was an agent of the Pretender. He sent for the suspected individual privately to the Castle, and thus addressed him: "Sir, I do not wish to inquire whether you have any particular employment in this kingdom, but I know that you have a great interest among those of your own persuasion. I have sent for you to exhort them to be peaceable and quiet. If they behave like faithful subjects, they shall be treated as such; but if they act in a different manner, I shall be worse to them than Cromwell." The person addressed recognized the force and justice of the intimation. To be "worse than Cromwell" meant much; but the threat was uttered by a man who looked quite capable of carrying it out, if need were. Still, the conditions were fair, and the manner of the speaker free from insult; nor is it by any means unlikely that the perfect quiescence of Ireland, whilst "the '45 rebellion" raged in

the sister island, was in some measure owing to the story being widely spread among the gentleman's co-religionists. On the other hand, the Protestant Master of the Rolls, who, though not quite so exalted an official as his successors have since become,<sup>1</sup> was a very important personage in his own estimation and that of the public, upon one occasion headed the Opposition in the Irish Parliament to a Government measure of importance. The Lord-Lieutenant sent for him, heard what he had to say in explanation of his conduct, and then addressed him in words that sound like cuts from a whip. "Master," said His Excellency, "you must do the King's business, or be turned out of your employment; and if you are, I shall not do with you as they do in England, for you shall never come in again so long as I have any power." The Master saw the force of the remark, withdrew his opposition, and the King's business was done with commendable dispatch. Nor did he hesitate to deal speedily and firmly with that social tyranny which prevailed when country squires of brutal nature took advantage of their position to ill-treat those beneath them. A person of considerable repute in the county of Kerry, a member of Parliament, was indebted to a neighbouring tradesman who had frequently applied to him for the payment of his just demand. The tradesman going one day to this gentleman's house to renew his application, the latter ordered his servants to "tie him to the pump and horsewhip him," orders which were obeyed with the utmost severity. The unfortunate tradesman came up to Dublin and laid his complaint before the Lord-Lieutenant, who immediately directed a special commission of Oyer and Terminer to repair to the county and try the cause, the consequence of which was that the aggressor was fined in a very heavy penalty.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The post was then, in fact, a sinecure; and it was Lord Chesterfield's intention to have had it assimilated to the corresponding office in England, by obliging the Master to assist the Lord Chancellor.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, p. 271 *n*.

These and similar evidences of a masterful spirit were by no means calculated to diminish the new Viceroy's popularity in a country where the epithet "the masther" is an ordinary term of affection. The military instinct being very strongly developed among the Irish, nowhere is the right to rule more cheerfully recognized than in the land of *mis-rule*, when that right happens to be vested in a born leader of men, who shows that he is determined to exercise it at once firmly and justly, without fear or favour. At the same time, when dealing with a highly sensitive people, it is advisable that the hand of iron should be encased in a velvet glove, and Chesterfield easily supplied the latter adjunct. His exquisite manners stood him here in good stead, and what he had to do in the way of compulsion was deprived of its sting by his way of doing it. Then, too, his rank, prestige, wit, intellectual accomplishments, gallantry, and magnificence, were duly appreciated in a land which has far more in common with French and Oriental tastes than with the sober preferences of northern latitudes. In the opinion of its inhabitants he deserved to rule because he stood high above everybody else in those qualities which it seemed to them a ruler should possess. The splendour of his Court, the elegance of his deportment, his ready wit, his tinge of letters, his dignified bonhomie, his polished eloquence, and his continental reputation, were so many letters of credit upon which the citizens of the Irish capital were content that he should draw liberally; and when, in the course of his administration, he gained the confidence of the mass of the population, who professed the subject faith, by his fair, reasonable dealing and strict impartiality, the whole country may be said to have accepted him like a gift from heaven. What makes this the more remarkable is that, owing probably to the nature of his "instructions," but little hope could have been derived from his formal state utterances that his rule would prove less one-sided than that of his most intolerant predecessors. In his first

speech, delivered at Dublin to both Houses of Parliament on 8 October, 1745, he lays great stress upon the advantages that Ireland had enjoyed under a succession of Protestant princes ; “ hopes that the measures which had hitherto been taken to prevent the growth of Popery had some, and would have a still greater, effect, and requests his hearers to consider whether nothing further can be done, either by new laws or by the more effectual execution of those in being, to secure this nation against the great number of Papists, whose speculative errors would only deserve pity if their pernicious influence upon civil society did not both require and authorize restraint.” This eloquent tirade against what might not unfairly be termed the national faith has almost comical significance, as issuing from a man who did not attach the slightest importance to creeds. But, reading between the lines, one can see that it was really levelled at the Jacobite disaffection which he had been sent to quell, and which, as threatening the Protestant succession, was conveniently identified with Popery itself. When all apprehension of the Pretender’s rebellion extending to Ireland had disappeared, the enthusiastic Protestantism of the Viceroy vanished with it ; nor is there a single instance on record of his displaying the zeal of a reformer against any votary of the ancient faith upon merely polemical grounds. From the very first, too, he avoided the radical error of betraying to the Roman Catholic population, which at the time outnumbered the Protestants by five to one, that he was in the least afraid of them, or had the least apprehension that they would throw in their lot with those disaffected subjects of His Britannic Majesty who, in the sister country of Scotland, had espoused the cause of the Pretender. No reason whatever was given them to suppose that they were regarded by him with less confidence than their Protestant fellow-citizens. He at once revoked the policy by which, at the first breaking out of the rebellion, the private Papist chapels had been ordered to be shut up, and proclamations

issued to compel the priests to leave the capital. He allowed the Catholics perfect religious freedom ; intimated that he wished their places of worship to remain open, and took measures to prevent any molestation of those who resorted to them. He threw cold water on the fussy intolerance of those who predicted danger from their proximity ; as when, for instance, a zealous Protestant courtier warned him that one of his coachmen was a Roman Catholic who privately went to Mass. "Does he, indeed?" was the reply. "Well, I will take care he shall never carry *me* there." He discountenanced the alarmist spirit ever on the watch for, and eager to believe, idle rumours of disaffection. A worthy Castle official brought him one morning intelligence, communicated with manifest perturbation, that he was "assured upon good authority that the people of Connaught were actually rising"; whereupon Lord Chesterfield, having first deliberately consulted his watch, replied with much composure: "Well, it is nine o'clock, and certainly time for them to rise; I therefore believe your news to be true." Without taking any exceptional precautions for his own safety, he moved freely amongst the population; encouraged free and full attendance at those public functions over which it devolved upon him in his character of Viceroy to preside; exercised a splendid and unrestricted hospitality; and whilst he mixed freely in the fashionable society of the capital, did not omit to make himself personally acquainted with the habits and conditions of the poorer classes. Demeanour of this kind on the part of a ruler seldom fails to exercise a calming effect even in the most troublous times; and the new Lord-Lieutenant's genial, self-possessed, and unprovocative bearing reassured everybody. "By constantly appearing to be afraid of nothing," says Dr. Maty,<sup>1</sup> "he spread an universal belief that nothing was to be feared; and by the ridicule he threw upon the violent measures which were proposed to

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 263.

him, he manifested his desire of abstaining from them till there was real danger." His firm and confident demeanour soon had its effect. Writing to his friend Mallet, a couple of months after his arrival (27 November, 1745), he says: "I have with much difficulty quieted the fears here, which were at first very strong, partly by contagion from England, and partly from prejudices which my good subjects are far from being yet above. They are in general still at the year 1689, and have not shook off any religious or political prejudice that prevailed at that time. However, I am very glad I am among them, for in this little sphere a little may do a great deal of good."

But all this time his watchfulness never relaxed for a moment. From every possible source, public and private, he sought intelligence of the progress of the rebellion in England and Scotland; whilst all through Ireland his emissaries were posted to acquire and transmit the earliest news of any communication between that country and Great Britain or France, or of any suspicious movements among its inhabitants. There was indeed good ground for apprehending that the rebellion might spread to Ireland. A people who had been deprived of their property, or harassed in their possession of it, might, not unnaturally, be disposed to try a change of government; whilst sympathy with the Stuart cause had been so long a tradition there that it would take very little to reawaken it in favour of a young and gallant prince desperately fighting for an inheritance which Ireland had already done its best to save. There were thousands of exiles in France who had relations and friends in the country, all of whom might be expected to join in the movement, if once set on foot; and around these would gather the bulk of the oppressed population, whilst at the back of all were the armed resources of hostile France. The means at his disposal for quelling by force a movement of the kind were thought to be far from adequate—the number of



troops being small, and the sum accorded for the maintenance of the military establishment proportionate. To remedy this deficiency at a time when Great Britain required for her own defence all the men and money at her command was impossible, except by sacrifices and risks which Lord Chesterfield was too good an Englishman lightly to incur; and he at once rejected the counsel of those alarmists who recommended that four thousand additional troops should be raised to supply the deficiency. Further, when in its dire necessity the British Government pressed him to spare four battalions from the Irish establishment to reinforce the Duke of Cumberland's army, then coping with the rebels, he consented, and these battalions were accordingly transferred from the Irish to the English establishment; and although they were afterwards replaced, it was not by the expensive mode of forming new regiments, which would have enabled him to gratify his own friends by the disposal of commissions, but by raising additional companies in which the sons of old officers who were desirous of it were granted ensigns' commissions; whilst for the maintenance of his forces he only demanded about £600,000, part of which sum was to be applied in discharge of a former debt. This amount it was proposed to raise by the issue of debentures; and on finding that these debentures were at a premium of 6 per cent, he took advantage of the circumstance by stipulating that no interest should be paid for the first year. It is satisfactory to know that the debentures were gladly taken up, even on these conditions, whilst the Irish ratepayer had little reason to complain of the rate of interest, which, for the time, was abnormally low.

Having got the money, he now resolved that it should be expended to the best advantage. Some £60,000 of the amount had been voted for the purchase of arms to equip provincial levies in the event of an invasion taking place. These arms were to be supplied by contractors at Dublin

and Birmingham; and as former experience had shown, there was some possibility that the contractors might evince more concern for their own profits than for the quality of their goods. To obviate this, Lord Chesterfield appointed two military officers, one of whom was to superintend the manufacture of weapons at Dublin, and the other at Birmingham. The result proved most satisfactory: there was no defect in the arms, and a saving of £25,000 in the expenditure, which latter sum was applied to public uses, especially to the completion of certain portions of Dublin Castle, where the splendid "St. Patrick's Hall" remains a monument of His Excellency's caution. It was further his intention to have erected new barracks for troops in those parts of the country where the authority of Government required strengthening; but the shortness of his stay interfered with the execution of this design. In fact, though not a soldier by profession, he evinced the keenest and most practical interest in military affairs; he neglected no precaution whereby the country might be placed in a position of security against foreign or domestic foes; and it was even his intention, had the rebellion spread to Ireland, to have taken command of the army in person—not from any wish to supersede those better qualified than himself to conduct warlike operations, but in fulfilment of a duty which he assumed devolved upon him, as the representative of his sovereign, and the person primarily responsible for the conduct of affairs. Nor was he less concerned for the individual well-being of the soldier than for the general efficiency of his army; whenever he found unrecognized merit he hastened to reward it so far as in him lay. Observing one day at his levee an officer whose face was marked with scars, he entered into conversation with him, found that he was a captain on half-pay who had been severely wounded in His Majesty's service, and who was now without employment through no fault of his own. The upshot of this

interview was that, on the very first opportunity which offered, that captain got a company. Upon another occasion, it being represented to him that the pay of the officers of the Yeomen of the Guard, or as they were called in Dublin, "The Battle-axes," was insufficient, he had it increased. One evening soon afterwards, as he was returning to the Castle attended by some of the Battle-axes, he remarked to one of them: "I suppose you have heard that the pay of your officers has been raised. Why don't you apply to some of your friends to speak to me in your favour?" The men answered that they had no friends. "What do you take *me* for?" was his reply. "I am sure you deserve an increase, and I will be your friend." Nor did he fail to keep the promise.

It is no reflection upon his policy of toleration that it may have been dictated by deeper motives than that regard for abstract justice which appears upon the surface. A man who is responsible for the peace of an unsettled country exposed to influences which may at any moment kindle the flame of insurrection cannot dispense altogether with the subtleties of statecraft, however much he may prefer honest and open dealing. Popery was more than a creed in Ireland; it was a tremendous moral, political, and material force whose power over the population entrusted to his government transcended all other influences, and against which he had to guard by every resource that ingenuity or expediency suggested. The public believed, and at the time rightly believed, that it was inseparable from Jacobitism; consequently, now that a great Jacobite movement was convulsing England and Scotland, it behoved the ruler of a neighbouring country, five-sixths of whose population were Papists, to spare no measures by which the strength of that majority might be held in check. It is therefore no disparagement to Chesterfield if we accept the view taken of his conduct in keeping the chapels open, and encouraging both priests and people to

use them, that it was prompted mainly by the wish to discover whether the Roman Catholics remained in the kingdom, or left it to join their co-religionists in Scotland ; and that, to ascertain this, he employed persons to frequent the chapels and fairs for the purpose of reporting to him how they were attended. The *ruse*, if it existed, was perfectly justifiable in the circumstances ; nor need he be grudging the satisfaction with which he is said to have received assurances that both chapels and fairs were as much frequented as ever. The fact was that the people were perfectly content in their new-found liberty, and manifested no desire to change a rule which sat so lightly upon them. The reaction which ensued when the pressure of coercion, deprivation, extortion, and general maltreatment had been removed, was all in favour of peace ; and this disposition was strengthened by the attitude of those priests who, sensible of the justice and tolerance of the new administration, co-operated with the Protestant clergy in endeavouring to maintain order and tranquillity.<sup>1</sup> The calm demeanour of the Viceroy, too, had a reassuring effect upon that section of the population which had most to fear from the horrors of an outbreak. "By constantly appearing to be afraid of nothing," says Dr. Maty, "he spread an universal belief that nothing was to be feared."<sup>2</sup> Nor was this altogether an assumed indifference. The longer he remained in Ireland, the more he became convinced that, in the absence of provocation, there was little to be feared from the Roman Catholic element ; and in a letter to one of his apprehensive Dublin friends, written shortly after his departure from Ireland, he gives this wise counsel : "Leave us and your regular forces in Ireland to fight for you ; think of your manufactures at least as much as of your militia, and be as much on your guard against Poverty as against Popery ; take my word for it, you are more in danger of the former than of the latter."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maty, p. 262.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.    <sup>3</sup> To Thomas Prior, Esq., 14 June, 1746.

His lordship's broad hint in the letter just quoted, as to the comparative neglect of Irish manufacturing industries, leads naturally to a consideration of steps taken by him to improve the material prosperity of the country. Here he had to grapple with the most difficult problem which presents itself to every statesman entrusted with the direction of Irish affairs—the prevalent apathy, partly the result of continued failure, but mainly characteristic of the Irish nature, which, in its own country at least, and allowing for brilliant exceptions, seems for the most part incapable of that sustained effort necessary for success in most human undertakings. It is not so much the want of capital, or of thrift, or of industry, or even of enterprise, that handicaps the average Irishman, as the fatal habit of acquiescence with the conditions of that state of life to which he is born; or, when he tries to emerge from the latter, of that sturdy indifference to temporary checks which enables people of more phlegmatic constitution to reach the goal for which they are striving. There is not a more thrifty creature in the world than the Irish peasant, nor unfortunately is there one who has a lower standard of living; there is not a more industrious, but he is usually content to expend his labour on a patch of ground that, at best, can only yield him a bare subsistence; there is not habitually a more temperate one, though like all his other habits this temperance is liable to occasional interruptions. The life that his father had lived seems good enough for their son and for his children; civilization and progress are for others, he cares not to follow in their train. Being passionately fond of money, he often contrives to amass considerable savings; but he rarely invests them except in land, which he proceeds to cultivate under the same conditions as his original patch; and though he may die a richer man than his father, it is only very rarely that he will be found to have mounted higher in the social scale. Earth-hunger has bound him and his to the soil, with its

associations of penury, hardship, and disappointment ; and he rarely rises above the condition of an emancipated serf. The feverish enterprise of manufacturing industry, the splendid gains of commerce, lie beyond his hopes and wishes ; since to pursue them would take him out of the groove to which he is accustomed, and which he shrinks from changing. With the greater issues of life he concerns himself to just the extent that might be expected of so vegetative a creature. He accepts unquestioningly the religion of his forefathers, and commits all the responsibilities of his immortal nature to the priests. His politics are traditional ; or if he varies them, it is not of his own initiative, but at the bidding of those whom he regards as his superiors in intelligence. His conception of national progress is a blank, filled in from time to time, by rumour, with shadowy pictures which rather amuse than interest him ; whilst the notion of his being a unit factor in the sum of national results never dawns upon him. Having himself to look after, he looks after little else ; and what public spirit he professes is usually that of discontent with the ruling powers.

Like every attempt to portray a type of human character, the above description is necessarily subject to great and numerous exceptions. Whether it applies at all to the Irishman of the present day is a question upon which there is likely to be great diversity of opinion ; that it applies in any general sense to the northern peasantry of our time is not even contended ; but there is little doubt that it is a fairly accurate portrait of the average Irish tenant-farmer as he existed some hundred and fifty years ago, when atrocious misgovernment, by denying him education, by proscribing his religion, by excluding him from political rights, by laying embargoes on such industries as might be within his scope, by holding out the succession to any property which he might acquire as a bribe to any of his relations who might become a rene-

gade;<sup>1</sup> in fact, by depriving him of every vestige of that independence which is essential to self-respect, reduced him to a condition of hopelessness which naturally produced indifference to all the higher aims of citizenship. Of such a man public spirit was not to be expected, if we except that form of it which takes the shape of chronic discontent. As he could scarcely be worse off than he was, the prospect of upsetting the existing state of things had always an attraction for him, and therefore he was nominally a rebel *in posse*—opportunity alone deciding whether he should not become one *in esse*. There existed no other outlet for such energy as he possessed. The brazen wall of oppression and discouragement by which he was surrounded so thoroughly excluded all prospect of peaceful progress that in time he came to forget the very existence of the latter; and his hopes, if any, of a regenerated Ireland presupposed the forcible extermination of the tyranny which ground the country beneath its heel. Higher up in the social scale, the absence of any real public spirit, though masked by blatant loyalty, was no less deplorable. The gentry and aristocracy, with very few exceptions, devoted themselves to the enjoyment of life without much thought of its responsibilities. Those who possessed such wealth as the country afforded spent it unproductively, for the most part, in a style of living which impoverished themselves without benefiting the community; those who had not money of their own usually lived on those who had, without being troubled by the derogatory thought of engaging in any useful em-

<sup>1</sup> By the Land Act, which, curiously enough, Lord Chesterfield seems to have approved of, doubtless because he regarded it as likely to increase the number of the Protestant (i.e. loyal) population, all the estate of a Papist intestate was upon his decease to be divided in equal parts, share and share alike, among his popish relations who were next of kin; but if one of these turned Protestant within a specified time, he became heir at law to the whole. This iniquitous law, which was repealed by the 1778 Geo. III, c. 49, was avowedly made in the reign of Queen Anne to weaken the Roman Catholic interest.

ployment. Trade or business of any kind was considered unworthy of a gentleman, except indeed that form of business which derived its remuneration from funds contributed by the taxpayer. Place-hunting was the most serious pursuit of the upper classes; and the main avenue to place being private interest, all capable aspirants to self-support reserved their energies for the work of convincing their friends, wriggling into Parliament, or climbing to preferment by the ladder of the law and the learned professions. Nepotism was a national institution. When an office became vacant, the question was not which of the candidates who applied for it was the man most capable for filling it, but which had the most powerful friends; and when Jack got into a good thing his relations and associates had a recognized claim to the benefit of any patronage which Jack might possess, or of such interest as he might be able to command. It was a delightful system for younger sons and impoverished gentlefolk; but it may be doubted whether it was that most conducive to the effective management of public affairs, seeing that it took away from productive pursuits the class who by their superior education, intelligence, and energy, were most fitted to develop the resources of their country. Lord Chesterfield did not require long to find out that public offices were being filled on this system, and he at once took steps to check it. A pleasant usage had long been exercised by his predecessors in the Viceroyalty of granting reversion of places to their friends, even when those places might not happen to fall vacant during their own tenure of office; the consequence of this generosity being that an incoming Viceroy might hardly have it in his power to nominate his own choice to a single office. Lord Chesterfield, finding himself thus hampered, resolved that his successor should not suffer in the same way; and therefore he pointedly refused to grant any reversion upon any solicitation whatsoever, being determined, as he expressed it, "to leave the kingdom



with clean hands." In a general way, too, he set his face against jobbery ; for, as his biographer remarks, "No man hated a job, and despised jobbery, more than he," though it must be owned that upon at least one occasion his right of patronage appears to have been exercised more from regard to personal feeling than to abstract justice. The instance is so exceptional that it may be mentioned. Among his most valued private friends was Dr. Synge, the Bishop of Elphin ; and out of personal regard for that prelate he promoted his brother from the arch-deaconry of Dublin to the bishopric of Killaloe. The appointment excited some comment among persons who failed to discern any exceptional claims in the new bishop to such preferment ; and one of them having remarked to His Excellency that the public were at a loss to know why it had been made, "Because his brother, the Bishop of Elphin, deserves *two* bishoprics," was the answer, which, though to an Irish mind it may have seemed reasonable enough, was scarcely worthy of the speaker.

But injurious as were the prevalent evils of nepotism and corruption, they were not those which militated chiefly against the progress of the Irish people. Similar evils exist in all countries, however prosperous, and nowhere were they more rife at this period than in free and prosperous England. The great obstacle to Ireland's advancement lay in the fact that those who were the natural leaders of her people, the aristocracy and gentry, failed to recognize their responsibilities. The feudal spirit is, or rather was, stronger in the breasts of Irishmen than perhaps among any other race in the world. They were wont to rely upon their social superiors for guidance and example to an extent not observable elsewhere ; to follow and obey members of the old families through good and evil fortune ; to copy their ways, and even to regard their vices as sanctified by the purity of their descent. Upon the other hand, without leadership, they were helpless to

a degree which is rare among northern races—wanting initiative, and, though brimful of slumbering energy, only to be roused into exertion by some strong incentive which, though it might carry them far at first, speedily lost its force, unless renewed from time to time by the stimulus of some master-spirit in whom they had confidence and who understood them. For this reason, no political or industrial movement was likely to succeed in Ireland unless governed and maintained, if not initiated, by the upper ranks of society; and, whether for good or for evil, the dormant energy of the masses could only be awakened and kept awake by their “betters.” Numerous examples of this will occur to those who study the history of the country, more especially its political history—and unfortunately, all the great national movements have been political, whilst instances of the contrary are very hard to find. From his own personal observation, and from the testimony of others, Chesterfield soon became aware not only of this fact, but of its being ignored by that class of persons whom it saddled with responsibility. The nobility and squirearchy of the country were, as he could see, almost exclusively concerned with their own selfish interests. The money which they drew from its resources was, in the great majority of instances, either squandered abroad, or unproductively spent at home. Personal indulgence, exaggerated display, lavish hospitality, reckless gambling, and improvident expenditure, were the objects to which wealth was devoted; whilst to the needs and sufferings of the lower orders, to the starving industries of the country, to education, civilization, and depauperization, little thought, and still less money, were given. There was, in fact, an utter absence of public spirit among those who were most bound to exhibit it; and, as a consequence, public progress was at a standstill. To remedy this state of things was no easy matter. Neglect and bad example in the highest quarters had served to form,

or to encourage, evasion of responsibilities, and the *laissez faire* of popularity-hunting viceroys had served to establish the very evils which they were sent to correct. Chesterfield, on the other hand, determined to initiate reform by his own example; nor was he the sort of man to be influenced in any line of conduct which he thought fit to pursue by the consideration of how other people might like it. By way of discountenancing extravagance he took care that, whilst the viceregal establishment was maintained with becoming splendour, there should be no waste, no mere vulgar display, no disorderly excess, or facilities of ruin. He, the veteran punter of White's, to whom play must have been as the very breath of his nostrils, did not allow any gambling to take place at the Castle during his tenure of office; he discountenanced excess of every kind, especially in wine, at his own table, and, so far as lay in his power, at such hospitalities as he accepted. To do this required considerable courage; for at that time drinking was the fashionable vice—wine-drinking especially—in the very nature of things, being the privilege of the wealthier classes. The Irish gentleman prided himself upon the superior quality of his claret, and grudged neither expense nor trouble in maintaining the reputation of his cellar, whilst chary of both in furthering the development of native products. Lord Chesterfield dwells reproachfully upon this fact in one of his letters to his friend Mr. Prior. "Five thousand tuns of wine imported *communibus annis* into Ireland," he writes, "is a sure but indecent proof of the excessive drinking of the gentry there, for the inferior sort of people cannot afford to drink wine there, as many of them can here; so that these five thousand tuns of wine are chiefly employed in destroying the constitutions, the faculties, and too often the fortunes of those of superior rank who ought to take care of all the others. Were there to be a contest between public cellars and public

granaries, which do you think would carry it? I believe you will allow that a Claret Board, if there were one, would be much better attended than the Linen Board, *unless when flax-seed were to be distributed.*"<sup>1</sup> And in advocating the support of a struggling Dublin industry—the manufacture of glass bottles—he adds, "I should hope at least that, considering the close connection there is between bottles and claret, this manufacture, *though your own*, may meet with encouragement."<sup>2</sup> Whilst, in pleading for the necessity of persistence in the work of educating the masses, he flings this not undeserved taunt at another national failing: "Though their operation [i.e. that of the "Charter Schools"] is sure, yet being slow, it is not suited to the Irish taste of *the time present only*; but I cannot help saying that, except in your claret, which you are very solicitous should be two or three years old, you think less of two or three years hence than any people under the sun." That His Excellency's remonstrances on this score had much effect upon the class of persons to whom they were addressed is very unlikely; but it is greatly to his credit that, in a drinking age, when the gift of "carrying his liquor well" was one qualification of a finished gentleman, he should have had the courage to urge them.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following extract explains the reference to flax-seed distribution: "I am very glad to hear that your Linen Board is to give out no more flax-seed, but only premiums for the raising it. That same flax-seed was the seed of corruption, which throve wonderfully in the soil of particular people, and produced jobs one-hundred-fold." And in a letter to Dr. Madden (15 September, 1748), "Remember the Linen Board, where the paltry dividend of a little flax-seed was become the seed of jobs."—*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> "Your making your own bottles might be some little degree of equivalent for what emptying bottles costs you. I wish every man in Ireland were obliged to make as many bottles as he empties, and your manufacture would be a flourishing one indeed."—To Mr. Prior, 6 May, 1747 (Bradshaw, p. 817 n.).

<sup>3</sup> In asking the Bishop of Waterford (18 June, 1747) for information regarding "an intended establishment at Waterford for the reception of foreigners," and the progress of the linen industry in that country, he goes on to say: "I wish my country-people, for I look upon myself as an Irishman

With similar honesty he laboured to overcome by the force of personal example another vice which, still more than that of drinking, militated against the national progress. It would be hardly correct to term it indolence, for no man can be more energetic than the Irishman when the object of exertion is suited to his tastes. War, sport, pleasure, politics, are objects which he is always ready to pursue with feverish activity, and at whatever cost of privation and endurance; but the sternest necessity is requisite before he will concentrate his energies upon those humdrum avocations which unfortunately constitute the ordinary business of life. The latter stimulus is sharp and constant enough amongst the humbler classes to preserve the habit of industry; but it is, or at any rate used to be, otherwise with the gentry; in fact, one recognized distinction between the gentleman and the plebeian of the eighteenth century in Ireland was that the former considered it beneath him to follow any avocation save that afforded by sport, pleasure, war, or the learned professions. If he could not follow these, he remained idle; and as the employment afforded by these pursuits was both limited and fluctuating, the ordinary Irish gentleman was, perhaps, the idlest occupant of God's earth. Chesterfield's eagle glance took in the situation, and he resolved to show that the highest person in the kingdom did not think it at all beneath him to engage in good, honest, hard work, day after day, and for the greater part of every day. From nine in the morning till three in the afternoon he transacted business with all the assiduity of a counting-house

still, would but attend half as much to those useful objects as they do to the glory of the militia and the purity of their claret. Drinking is a most beastly vice in every country; but it is really a ruinous one to Ireland: nine gentlemen in ten in Ireland are impoverished by the great quantity of claret which, from mistaken notions of hospitality and dignity, they think it necessary should be drunk in their houses; so this expense leaves them no room to improve their estates by proper indulgence upon proper conditions to their tenants, who must pay them to the full, and upon the very day, that they may pay their wine merchants."

clerk.<sup>1</sup> Anybody who requested an audience was granted one, and had his representations carefully considered by the Viceroy in person. No red-tape formalities embarrassed, disheartened, or impoverished the suitor. He was courteously received, carefully listened to, and civilly dismissed. If relief were promised, it was given speedily; if withheld, the disappointment was softened by the manner of refusal. Favours conferred derived additional grace from the mode of granting; and the disappointed suitor could not but acknowledge that he had been "treated like a gentleman." As for the man who submitted to His Excellency any plan for augmenting or developing the resources of the country, he was treated as if conferring, not receiving, an obligation. There was no putting off with empty forms; no snubbing by official underlings; no extortion by back-stair mercenaries. The Viceroy insisted upon doing his own business himself, and what is more, did it so uncommonly well that everybody, save and except the official people, had nothing to complain of. The oddity of this behaviour on the part of a Lord-Lieutenant did not fail to excite much comment in society, and that not of an altogether favourable kind. That Chesterfield was well aware of this is shown by a remark in one of his letters to Mr. Prior: "I am sensible," he writes, "that I shall be reckoned a

<sup>1</sup> "He worked prodigiously hard all the time; and when asked one day by a wondering son of the soil how he managed to get through so much business, his answer was—'Because I never put off to to-morrow what I can do to-day'" (this was a saying of the Pensionary De Witt—*v. Ernst*, p. 318), which was a most un-Irish proceeding. "The truth is," he writes to a friend from Dublin Castle, "that the business of this place, such as it is, is continual, and as I am resolved to do it while I am here, it leaves me little or no time to do things I should like much better" (to Dr. Mallet, 27 November, 1745). With the flatulent proceedings of the Irish Parliament he did not apparently concern himself much, as the records only occasionally allude to his going there for the purpose of giving the Royal Assent to Money Bills, though he was punctilious in the discharge of the various representative and exemplary duties devolving on the Viceroy, as for instance in attending divine service regularly at the cathedral of Christ Church. Entry under 18 December, 1745: "Went to Christ Church, as usual" (*Diary of Lord C.*).

very shallow politician for my attention to such trifling objects as the improvement of your lands, the extension of your manufactures, and the increase of your trade which only tend to the advantages of the public; whereas an able lord-lieutenant ought to employ his thoughts in greater matters.”<sup>1</sup> The pains he took to discover means by which the people should be drawn to engage in manufactures, instead of sinking all their capital and labour in land, were incessant. At one time he is found advocating the glass-bottle industry already referred to; at another, it is paper-making. Nothing but care and industry is wanted, he thinks, to bring Dublin-made writing-paper—of which a specimen had been submitted to him, to such a perfection as to supersede that made in Holland and France; and the defects he points out in the sample furnished for his inspection prove how carefully he had considered the matter. “Though good,” he writes, “it was not so good as it should, and as I am sure it might, be, with care. It was too spongy and bibulous, which proceeds only from want of care in choosing and sorting the best rags.” Then there was the “making of starch from potatoes,” which had just been started in England, and which he thought might be most advantageously practised in Ireland. “These,” pleads the earnest and caustic Viceroy, “are the sort of jobs that I wish people in Ireland would attend to with as much industry and care as they do jobs of a very different nature. These honest arts would solidly increase their fortunes and improve their estates, upon the only true and permanent foundation, the public good.” He sought out all the Irishmen who had given any evidence of public spirit, and made them his friends. There was Dr. Maule, Bishop of Meath, whom he termed his “Charter-school<sup>2</sup> apostle,” and whose efforts to diffuse

<sup>1</sup> To Prior, 15 July, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> “The Irish,” he writes to Dr. Madden (15 September, 1748), “may be a rich and happy people, *bona si sua nōrint*. Free from the heavy load of debts and taxes under which the English groan, as fit for arts, sciences,

education among the masses he supported strenuously; there was the amiable and notable Berkeley, Bishop of

industry, and labour as any people in the world, they might, notwithstanding some hard restraints which England by a mistaken policy has laid them under, push several branches of trade to great perfection and profit; and not only supply themselves with everything they want, but other nations too with many things. . . . But jobs and claret engross and ruin the people of fashion, and the ordinary people (as is usual in every country) imitate them in little momentary and mistaken views of present profit, and in whisky."

As the *Protestant Charter Schools* formed a very important part of Lord Chesterfield's Utopian scheme for the extirpation of disloyalty from Ireland by the simple process of transforming Irish Papists into Irish Protestants, some account of them may be given here. They owed their origin to the fact that, at the time when they were founded, the children of Roman Catholics were debarred from being educated otherwise than according to the principles of the established Church, which practically meant that the only legal means by which the great majority of Roman Catholic parents could obtain a decent education for their children lay in permitting them to attend schools which were, naturally enough, discountenanced by their own priests. Chesterfield found this system in full operation upon his arrival in Ireland, and that it was strongly supported by those to whom he was obliged to resort for advice in matters of the kind; nor, indeed, was there anything which ostensibly savoured of oppression in these schools at first. Founded in 1733 by an estimable Bishop of Clogher (Dr. Marsh), they were for some years conducted in a manner which left little to be objected to save their denominationalism; but gradually the proselytising zeal of over-enthusiastic Protestants seems to have altered their innocuous character, until their object was avowedly declared to be: "To rescue the souls of thousands of poor children from the dangers of popish superstition and idolatry." It is hardly necessary to say that the Roman Catholic clergy took umbrage at such a programme, or that they discountenanced sending the children of their co-religionists to the schools. To counteract this opposition the school managers next offered to receive children of Roman Catholic parents when six years old, and not only to educate, but to feed and clothe them gratuitously, on condition that they were to be brought up as Protestants. Then finding that, in spite of such inducements, parents still held aloof, the managers started what were practically *crèches* in which *infants* might be left, on the same condition, by any parents who wanted to be rid of them—an offer which, as might have been foreseen, resulted in some detriment to morals. Though he would scarcely have approved of this last development, Chesterfield, finding the schools in the first glory of their inception, was delighted with the facilities which they afforded to his project of a wholesale national conversion of Ireland to Protestantism; and in addition to supporting them most strenuously himself, besought the Irish House of Commons, on taking leave of them, "To assist that most prudent as most compassionate charity, the Protestant Charter Schools, with their constant protection and encouragement." (For fuller particulars on this subject, see Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, p. 200 *et seq.*)



Cloyne, who had refused preferment to a richer see, because unwilling to limit his freedom of action in the cause of truth; there was the learned and worthy Dr. Madden, the friend of education, whom the Earl styles "my honest and indefatigable friend in good works"; also Dr. Synge, Bishop of Elphin, most highly prized of all, who in his opinion "deserved *two* bishoprics"; and Dr. Stone, Bishop of Derry, for whom he was instrumental in securing the primacy; and to these might have been added a greater than all—Swift, his friend of old standing—if madness had not clouded that mighty intellect which, unwrecked, might have guided the Viceroy into safer channels than those he followed. The close connection thus maintained between Church and State came rather as a surprise to those who fancied that they knew the Earl's character; but may be explained by that complete freedom from prejudice which always distinguished him. Provided that an instrument were well fitted to the work which he had in hand, he cared little from what quarter it came; and as the clergy of Ireland were among the most earnest and efficient workers in the cause of her advancement, he esteemed them accordingly. His secular friends were confined to no particular grade in society: they ranged from the Lord Chancellor to the country magistrate; from the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces to the Yeomen of the Guard; from the peer of the realm to the private gentleman;<sup>1</sup> whoever had, or found, useful work to do, and did it, became *ipso facto* a person whom he was glad to know. Nor was he slow in proclaiming his regard for such fellow-workers. Writing to a private gentleman, one of the founders of the Royal Dublin Society, after his return to England, he hopes to be reckoned in the number of his friends, adding: "I assure you I am, and I should not be the friend that I really am to Ireland, if I were not so to you who deserve so well of your country. I know

<sup>1</sup> To Prior, 6 May, 1747.

few people who, like you, employ both their time and their fortunes in doing public good, without the thoughts or expectations of private advantage ; when I say advantage, I mean it in the common acceptation of the word, which, thanks to the virtue of the times, implies only money ; for otherwise your advantage is very considerable from the consciousness of the good you do—the greatest advantage which an honest man is capable of enjoying.” For this same “Dublin Society,” which had previously been kept up by voluntary subscriptions, he succeeded in obtaining a grant from the Crown of five hundred a year, upon the ground that “They give premiums for the improvement of lands, for plantations, for manufactures. They furnish materials for these improvements in the poorer and less cultivated parts of this kingdom, and have certainly done a great deal of good.”<sup>1</sup> “Invitation, example and fashion, with some premiums attending them, are, I am convinced,” he goes on to say elsewhere, “the only methods of bringing people in Ireland to do what they ought to do, and that is the plan of the Society.” The earnestness with which he pursues objects of real importance to the country is frequently contrasted, even in his official dispatches, with very perfunctory recommendations on subjects which had hitherto chiefly engrossed the attention of his predecessors. Thus, in a private dispatch to the Duke of Newcastle, he coldly recommends the re-establishment of the Council Board, which had sunk into abeyance, chiefly on the ground that “it will provide a few peers with something to do” ; asks for a viscountship to be granted to the daughter of a sonless peer who asked for it, upon the ground that it was “a very common, and so far, a pardonable piece of human vanity” ; advocates the granting of pensions to two impecunious peers on the ground that “they have nothing of their own, and are part of the furniture of the House of Lords” ; with a few similar

<sup>1</sup> To the Duke of Newcastle, 11 March, 1746.

requests, adding in conclusion : " Having now finished, as I hope, all my recommendations for some time, I must beg leave to assure your Grace that they are, every one of them, the recommendations of His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant only, and that I am neither directly nor indirectly, in my private capacity, concerned in any one of them. I have neither retainer, friend, nor favourite among them." <sup>1</sup> He does not shirk such duties of his office as pertain to the personnel of the viceregal court; but he reserves his enthusiasm for what concerns the material welfare of the country which he has been sent to govern. " I would much rather be distinguished and remembered," he once said, " by the name of the *Irish Lord-Lieutenant* than by that of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland"—a distinction which he hoped to earn " by wishing Ireland all the good that is possible, and with doing it all the good I can." <sup>2</sup>

Whilst thus engaged in forwarding the peaceful interests of the country, Lord Chesterfield did not for a moment relax the work of precautions against the dangers which it was the special object of his mission to avert. With all his tolerance, he never lost sight of the fact that the Roman Catholic element contained in itself embers of disaffection which any passing wind of popular excitement might rouse into a flame; whilst the Protestant section, whatever its faults, must in the very nature of things preserve its loyalty to the English rule. For this reason he lent his support to certain movements set on foot by the Protestants in various counties,<sup>3</sup> to form armed associations of their members against insurrections from within, or attempts from abroad. These associations were sufficient to constitute, in point of numbers at least, a very considerable force. Antrim County alone furnished some thirty

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March, 1746. To the Duke of Newcastle he writes: " I have no great hopes that the Council in England will give much attention or dispatch to my Irish Bills . . . as to your humble servant, all he desires for himself is dispatch to his Irish Bills."

<sup>2</sup> To Prior, 23 September, 1746.

<sup>3</sup> *v. Maty*, p. 267.

thousand men, and the city of Dublin a force of upwards of twelve thousand militia, partly horse and partly foot, together with a corps of Volunteers. The Irish gentry, being passionately fond of the pomp and circumstance of war, threw themselves with great fervour into the movement; in fact, Chesterfield soon had to complain that it occupied too much of their attention, and we find him protesting more than once that, if they would only bestow as much attention upon more important things as they did upon the glory of their militia and, as he adds, the purity of their claret, it would be better for the country. Still, it was a great matter, he felt, to have an organized force at hand, consisting exclusively of the loyal element; and as the Protestants had done so much, he thought it incumbent on himself to take measures whereby the power for mischief of the possible enemy might be reduced to a minimum. One of these, which naturally suggested itself, was to endeavour to diminish the numbers of the Roman Catholics—not by driving them out of the country, but by *driving them into the Established Church*, and it was no doubt this idea which made him view the iniquitous “Gavel Act” with favour. But, as a compensating fact, it should be remembered that he was anxious for a repeal of the laws by which Papists in Ireland were at that time restrained from purchasing land. By giving them a stake in the country he thought that Government would secure their fidelity, whilst owing to the operation of the Gavel Act there was a strong probability that, “sooner or later, the estates would revert to Protestants”; which, though it may strike some of us as being the logic of an unscrupulous man, was deemed very sound good sense in the Ireland of his day. He had it also in contemplation, one time, to institute a public register of popish priests. But when he came to work at this project he found sectarian feeling ran so high that it was plain such a register would be made an instrument of

oppression ; whereupon he abandoned the notion altogether, and even took a step in the opposite direction by proposing to substitute a simple oath of allegiance for the oaths of supremacy and adjuration incumbent upon members of Parliament, and which no conscientious Papist could take.<sup>1</sup> Speaking generally, his opinion was that the proper methods to be employed by Government with regard to the Roman Catholics were good usage, supporting the "Charter-schools," and adhering strictly to his ugly duckling, the Gavel Act. But still Popery was a danger to be guarded against ; and as he remarks to his friend Dr. Chevenix, Bishop of Waterford, the popish religion and influence could not be subdued by force, though it might be undermined and destroyed by art. "Sleight of hand was necessary rather than a heavy hand" : in which conjecture he was, as we know, mistaken ; but who could ever predict what will, or will not, happen in Ireland ?

Chesterfield's policy of combined vigilance, firmness, and toleration was completely successful in averting danger from the apprehended source. No attempt to land troops in Ireland from the Continent was made whilst the rebellion lasted ; nor did the efforts of the Jacobite party in Scotland and England to open a correspondence with their Irish sympathizers prove more successful ; and when the Duke of Cumberland broke up the Pretender's army, little cause for anxiety remained. The removal of many grievances of long standing ; the comparative religious freedom which they now enjoyed ; the encouragement of industry ; the greater security of property ; the maintenance of strict justice in matters at issue between them and their Protestant fellow-subjects, seemed to inspire the Roman Catholics with confidence and contentment ; and while

<sup>1</sup> This object was afterwards effected by the 10 Geo. IV, c. 7, hence called the "Roman Catholic Relief Act" ; and a common form of oath for all members was substituted by 21 & 22 Vict. cc. 48 and 49.

Chesterfield's viceroyalty lasted the country had no more orderly and peaceful citizens than those who had previously been the terror and despair of its rulers. Whether this halcyon state of things would have lasted if his stay had been much prolonged, is another question. The records of Ireland are as changeable as her climate, and redress of grievances in that country is, as history shows, usually followed by demands for new concessions. Had these demands been made, it is quite possible that Chesterfield might have seen fit to lay aside his velvet glove, and to show himself, as he once threatened, "worse than Cromwell," in which case, no doubt, all his good qualities would have been forgotten, and his name handed down to posterity as one of Ireland's many oppressors. But he did not remain long enough to incur this risk,<sup>1</sup> and he left behind him a memory long cherished as that of the best Viceroy the country had as yet seen. Not that there are many outward and visible signs of the national gratitude remaining in evidence. His bust in Dublin Castle is about the sole public memento of the "good Lord-Lieutenant," if we except those left by himself;<sup>2</sup> and Irish historians have been somewhat sparing in his case of those panegyrics which they are wont to lavish upon Viceroys who deserved them less. Trinity College, Dublin, itself the subject of

<sup>1</sup> In March, 1746, we find him asking the Duke of Newcastle "to apply to His Majesty for his gracious permission for me to return to England, to lay myself at his feet," and hoping that it may be possible for him to do so at the end of that month or the beginning of the next, by which time he reminds the Duke that he will have been nearly eight months in Ireland. The reason for his return was evidently an impending shuffling of the political cards in England which, as he had long foreseen, was likely to affect his fortunes considerably, as will appear in the following chapter; and he merely waited to wind up the parliamentary session in Ireland before taking a well-earned holiday. At last the summons of recall was vouchsafed, and on 23 April, 1746, he sailed from the country for which he had worked so hard, and which he was never to see again.

<sup>2</sup> At the Viceregal Lodge is still shown an avenue of trees planted by his lordship; also a sculptured phoenix adorns "the Park," which his lordship, by a pardonable error, supposed to derive its name from that fabulous bird.

his unstinted praise, did not see fit to confer upon him any of those "graces" of which it is by no means sparing. No Dublin street bears his name, and no public monument attests his worth. Still, tributes of a less costly nature are not wanting. That prolific goddess, "the Irish Muse," indeed gave birth to many offshoots of doubtful immortality in honour of him, as also of his Countess, who, one is glad to find, achieved more popularity in the society of the capital<sup>1</sup> than fell to her lot elsewhere. Dr. Maty has preserved the following for the avowed reason that it is one of the shortest :—

Stanhope each purpose of his heart  
To generous views consigned ;  
And chose his method to be blest  
By blessing all mankind.

Stanhope, though high thy transports glow,  
To one false step descend ;  
Or you'll incur the dangerous woe  
Of him whom all commend.<sup>2</sup>

But the poor unlettered folk who had no money to spend on effigies, and were no adepts in verse-making, gave their benefactor all they could, their gratitude. When the day arrived on which he was to take ship for England, with the understanding that his absence was to be only temporary, large crowds collected round the Castle gates from an early hour (the embarkation was to take place at 9 a.m.) to bid him farewell. Ordinarily the departure of a Viceroy is attended with some pomp and more precaution ; but on this occasion the Earl dispensed with both, displaying to the last that perfect confidence in his subjects which had so large a share in securing their goodwill. As if reluctant to shorten the time of his stay among them, he did not even use a carriage on the occasion ;

<sup>1</sup> An inspired bricklayer, named Jones, addressed some verses to her on the occasion of her obtaining a pardon for two deserters.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, pp. 275-6.

but, accompanied by his Countess, walked slowly to the place of embarkation, whilst the sympathetic multitude, consisting of persons of all ranks and denominations, followed them to the water's-edge, where they remained while the ship that took them away was in sight, praising and blessing and entreating him and the good-natured Melusina, after the passionate Irish fashion, to "come back soon." It is passing strange that this hard, cynical man of the world, who laughed at sentiment, whose constant effort was to subject the natural to the artificial, could have endeared himself to an open-hearted, impulsive, ultra-sympathetic race; and it is still stranger that he should have cherished a genuine liking for them. Of this liking there is incontestable proof, not only in the few records we possess of his behaviour whilst among them, but in his correspondence after he left them. He tells the Bishop of Waterford, who was his own countryman, that he looks upon himself as "still an Irishman." In a letter addressed from London to Dr. Madden, written after his acceptance of the Foreign Secretaryship,<sup>1</sup> he deplores that in his present employment he will have less opportunity for effecting what he had much at heart. "It may seem vain to say so," he writes, "but I will own that I thought I could, and began to hope I should, do some good in Ireland. I flattered myself that I had put jobs a little out of fashion, and your own manufactures a little *in* fashion, and that I had in some degree discouraged the pernicious and beastly practice of drinking, with many other pleasing visions of public good. Fortune, Chance, or Providence, call it what you will, has removed me from you, and has assigned me another destination; but has not, I am sure, changed my inclinations, my wishes, or my efforts, upon occasion, for the interest and prosperity of Ireland; and I shall always entertain the truest affection for, and remembrance of, that country." He admired the animate and inanimate beauties

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 12 December, 1746.





*William Hoare Pinxt.*

*J. M. Ardell Sculp.*

THOMAS HOLLES, DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, ETC., ETC., ETC.



of the island, the former especially, and even seems to have enjoyed its climate. He revelled in Irish wit, and contributed a good deal of his own to the national repertory. Nay, he has even a good word for that tuber-edible to which, rightly or wrongly, are attributed many of Ireland's woes; as he declares that the Irish, who lived chiefly upon it, were "the healthiest and strongest men he had any knowledge of."<sup>1</sup> Instances could easily be multiplied of this assimilation between a people and a ruler who, at first sight, would appear to have very little in common. The hardy, practical, systematic nature of the one somehow fitted with the sensitive, impulsive, irregular constitution of the other into a harmonious composite, which gave good prospect of endurance. That, sooner or later, disintegration must have ensued; that the harmony would have been interrupted in the course of time, is very possible; but the great fact remains, that, for eight memorable months, Lord Chesterfield made Ireland what she never seems to have been for the same space of time, before or since—contented with English Rule. That she did not long remain so after his departure is unhappily evident from the fact that when his immediate successor, the Earl of Harrington, retired from the Viceroyalty, his leave-taking was attended with strikingly different incidents.

## SUPPLEMENT TO SECTION VII

The following extracts from *Faulkner's*<sup>2</sup> *Dublin Journal* for 1745 give a record of how the first half of Lord Chesterfield's brief sojourn in Ireland was spent, which may interest those who wish

<sup>1</sup> To Dayrolles, 27 April, 1750.

<sup>2</sup> Alderman George Faulkner, who conducted this admirable journal for more than fifty years, is best described in Chesterfield's letter addressed to him on 11 November, 1752 (see Bradshaw, vol. III, p. 1045), and in the same editor's note at p. 888 of vol. II.

to know something of Irish life in the eighteenth century. The paper was published only twice a week (on Wednesdays and Saturdays), so that it is not always easy to assign exact dates to the incidents described, but with this exception, the narrative may be taken as authentic :—

27 to 31 *August*.—"This day [31 August] His Excellency the Earl of Chesterfield, and his Countess, arrived here, and were received at their landing and conducted to the Castle with the usual ceremonies." We learn in another part of the paper that they arrived in the "Yatcht" [*sic*] from Holyhead, and that "the new Viceroy was received on landing by the Earl of Granard and Sir T. Prendergast, Bart., who rode with him to the Castle, where his commission was opened before the Lords Justices and the Privy Council, after which he took the oaths to qualify him for the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. The Lord Mayor, Sheriffs, and Aldermen met His Excellency at the end of Lazer's Hill, where the Recorder made a most excellent speech to him upon the occasion, and afterwards to his Countess. The same day Richard Lyddell, Esquire, his Secretary, was sworn a Privy Councillor; and on the next day [Sunday] His Excellency dined with the Primate, and on the day after with the Lord Chancellor [Lord Newport]; and was engaged to dine on [2 Sept. ?] with the Speaker [Boyle]." We also learn that "On the first Sunday after his arrival his Excellency attended service at the Castle Chapel, when the Right Revd. Dr. Chevenix preached an excellent sermon." From the pulpit to poetry seems a natural transition; and the following epigram is inserted :—

While G . . . . e, like Jove, the sword of justice bears,  
The Diadem with C . . . . . ld he shares.

Also,

Rejoice, Hibernia, to thy favoured shore—  
Lord of the Isle, Great Chesterfield comes o'er, etc.

And yet another :

Stanhope, thou Miracle designed  
Of Fortune to the worthy kind !  
The fickle Goddess once is right,  
And acts as if she'd got her sight.

Several other poems on His Excellency, we are told, await insertion.

On Tuesday (3 September), "The Lord Mayor and the Corporation, with the Provost and Fellows of the University, and likewise the French Protestants residing in Dublin, waited upon His Excellency at the Castle, to congratulate H.E. upon his arrival, and to acknowledge the great favour done them by His Majesty sending them a Governor of his Lordship's vast abilities and understanding." To which, we are told, H.E. "returned the most polite answers."

On 4 September it is stated that "His Excellency and his Countess, with a great number of nobility and gentry, dined with the Lord Mayor ; and on the next day with the Archbishop of Dublin ; and on the day after that, with the Right Honble. Luke Gardner, Esq.," and it is added that "Villars Fitzgerald Esq., has been appointed 'gentleman-of-the-bedchamber.'"

The issue of 7 September contains a notice (dated 6 September) from Dublin Castle (and signed by Mr. Lyddell) to the effect that an anonymous letter had been received there, and that "If the person who wrote it will apply to him [i.e. the Secretary] he may be assured of secrecy and a suitable reward."

10 to 14 *September*.—"The Lord Mayor and Corporation of Dublin issued a proclamation on the 13th, offering

£6,000 for the apprehension of the Pretender; and His Excellency dined at Lord Mountjoy's in Stephen's Green."

. . . . .

The issue of 14 to 17 September contains a long poem (fifteen stanzas) on His Excellency's arrival, in which he is styled "Britain's Guardian Angel," and all the nine Muses are described as waiting on their master. In the same column is an account of the forcible abduction of a young lady on the previous day, "as she was crossing Essex Bridge at noon-day, by two ruffians in the sight of several spectators"; and the editor justly observes that "If such violent attempts as these are suffered to go unpunished, what Lady of Family, Fortune, or Character, can be safe, when she may be taken by a superior force in the most populous part of this great city?"

. . . . .

17 to 21 *September*.—While His Excellency was dining peacefully at Lord Tullamore's, some footpads were plying a lively trade in the vicinity of Golden Bridge and Kilmainham. Honest people are recommended "not to ride in these neighbourhoods after dark."

. . . . .

The issue of 17 to 21 September announces that His Excellency will review the Dublin Militia on 2 October, on which occasion it is anticipated "there will be the greatest appearance of citizens of the first rank, as well as of all the others, that ever has been known upon the like occasion"; and it is added that "many are making up new cloathes to appear that day." But amid all this hope and splendour it is sad to read that "great numbers of poor weavers and other tradesmen in a very perishing condition implore the charity of the publick"—an appeal being made that no persons will allow themselves to be seen at the projected festivities "with any Foreign luxury or Foppery on them," but will patronize "the Linen and Cambrick of Ireland" more especially, "as hath the Countess

of Chesterfield, who bought some pieces of the latter this week." A poem in the same issue describes the "Nymphs of Hibernia" as of rather florid complexion :—

A blooming race,  
With crimson lustre bloom anew.

After which comes a piteous wail from the poor prisoners who beg for charity in the *Four Courts Marshalsea*, and who are "the most miserable objects in any Christian Nation"—this obtrusive blending of luxury and squalor being, somehow, characteristic of Ireland. One is glad to read that His Excellency pardoned a couple of deserters "when they were led out to be shot."

On 27 September, His Excellency was presented with the Freedom of the City (in a gold box); and a similar compliment (but in a silver box) was paid to his private secretary, Mr. Lyddell.

28 September to 1 October.—While announcing that "there is not the least likelihood of any commotion in Ireland," the journal comforts its readers with the assurance that "Many Roman Catholics have expressed their loyalty to the Government, and have not given the least disturbance."

1 to 5 October.—On 2 October the Dublin Militia was reviewed by His Excellency, who was pleased to say that "He never saw so fine a militia." Of course a poem was made on the occasion, of which the concluding lines may be given :—

We hate Pretenders, and we scorn to fear—  
*George* is in Britain; *Chesterfield* is here.

There is little doubt as to the nationality of another poet, who celebrates in the following rhymed couplet—

An Island worthy of its pious race,  
In war triumphant, and unmatched in peace.

This poetic frenzy, one is glad to find, assumed a more practical shape by starting "a general subscription" to defray the cost of raising and paying a force "for the support of our happy constitution." All the peerage (especially the episcopal peers) being "lavish of promises and incentives to patriotism."

8 to 12 *October*.—On the 8th of this month "His Excellency went in great state to Parliament and made a most eloquent speech in both Houses." In the Lords, notice was given of a "Bill to prohibit the Natives of this Kingdom, of the Romish Religion, who shall go into any foreign service whatsoever, either as officers or private soldiers, from enjoying any estate or title whatsoever for the future."

12 to 15 *October*.—The bards are evidently tiring, for we find one of them recommending—

'Tis Chesterfield should write, when Chesterfield's the theme.

But the bishops are most energetic, the paper being almost filled with lengthy expositions of their loyal sentiments.

22 to 26 *October*.—Under the former date, we read that "The late *Dean Swift* was interred at midnight in St. Patrick's in a most decent and private manner in accordance with his Will"; and on the day following, "The young gentlemen of our University who are Sophisters, and call themselves the Senate, resolved that certain monies intended for festive purposes should be expended on a bust of the deceased."

26 to 29 *October*.—The Earl and Countess, it appears, "dined at the college with the Provost and Senior Fellows," being greeted with many Latin speeches, "with all which speeches," we are assured, "His Excellency was much pleased, and expressed his entire satisfaction at them."



29 *October* to 2 *November*.—We find from this number that the Pretender's eldest son was burnt in effigy, and the Pretender himself crowned with a warming-pan, at Youghal; whereas the anniversary of His Majesty's birth was celebrated with great splendour at Dublin Castle. "The choicest wines flowed in appropriate profusion from 'The Temple of Minerva'—the whole forming a sort of Paradise"; and we are further told that "The Countess of Chesterfield was better dressed and made a finer appearance than ever was seen in this kingdom . . . though she had not one thread of any manufacture upon her but the produce of Ireland." Many ladies "remarkable for beauty and fine shape" followed this excellent example, and "the Gentlemen wore cloths and Ratteens of native manufacture, for which they were cordially thanked."

. . . . .

9 to 12 *November*.—"On the anniversary of the birth and landing of the late King William, of glorious and immortal memory, H.E. attended by the Nobility and Gentry made a fine procession from the Castle to *Stephen's Green*, after which he dined with the Lord Mayor. In the evening the tragedy of *Tamerlane* was acted in honour of the day, and there were bonfires, illuminations, etc."

In an address to the King (George II), congratulating him on his return to Great Britan from Hanover, the authorities and citizens of Dublin avow that "it is their particular pride that they are governed by that wise and faithful minister of His Majesty, the Earl of Chesterfield . . . who hath already justly gained the universal esteem and confidence of all your Majesty's loyal subjects in this kingdom."

. . . . .

In the issue of 19 to 23 *November* we have an advertisement of *The Dublin Privateer*, fitting out at Kinsale, which wants a crew, and invites able seamen and landsmen to serve on board. In the next issue occurs another advertise-

ment calling for "Recruits for *Sir J. Ligonier's Regiment of Horse*: candidates must be 5 ft. 10 in. without shoes."

3 to 7 *December*.—The public are informed that "The Rev. Mr. May, curate of Armagh, hath at his own expense furnished ten muskets, ten bayonets, ten Broad Buff-Belts, with cartouches for ten shots each, for ten Protestants, to be added to the Militia company of Captain Cut's Company of the said force, and proper Regimentals for six of them."

10 to 14 *December*.—There is another outburst of poetry. One effusion "On seeing a picture of Lord Chesterfield"—which, of course, fails to do him justice—declares that "Flaccus is surpassed by Stanhope."

17 to 21 *December*.—We have the interesting announcement that "On the 19th Dec. The Grand Sacred Oratorio *The Messiah* was performed, at the Great Music Hall in Fishamble Street, for the benefit of those imprisoned for debt in the several Marshalseas. H.E. and the Countess were present"; also, a few nights after, at "a subscription ball in Crow Street—a gentleman's ticket costing a crown, and a lady's half-a-crown."

A performance of "Mr. Handel's grand Oratorio of *Deborah*, for a charitable object, is also announced to take place"; and we find that their Excellencies commanded, for the 1st January next ensuing, a performance of *The Fair Penitent*, with the following cast, at Smock Alley Theatre:—

<i>Lothario</i> , by Mr. Garrick.	<i>Lavinia</i> , by Mrs. Walker.
<i>Horatio</i> , by Mr. Sheridan.	<i>Calista</i> , by Mrs. Bellamy.
<i>Sciolto</i> , by Mr. Ebrington.	
<i>Altamont</i> , by Mr. Lacey.	
with singing, by Mr. Storer.	



*Ravenet Sculp*

PULTENEY, EARL OF BATH



VIII

FROM VICEROY  
TO SECRETARY OF STATE

THE circumstances attending Chesterfield's recall<sup>1</sup> from Ireland being matters of general history need not detain us very long. Owing to the King's partiality for Granville, and the influence which that statesman, by means of his numerous adherents in office, still exercised over affairs; also, though in a less degree, to the power wielded by Pulteney, Earl of Bath, by similar means, the Pelhams found themselves in an awkward position. They were conscious of being treated by His Majesty with a coldness and reserve which led them to apprehend their own dismissal when they should have succeeded in doing the only work which he required of them, namely carrying the votes of supply. For self-protection they saw it was necessary that the Granville and Bath factions in the administration should be got rid of, and they resolved to force matters to an issue while they still remained masters of the situation. Accordingly, they took a step which, by bringing them into direct conflict with the Crown, was calculated to impress upon His Majesty the conviction that he could not get on without them, and that to keep them he must sacrifice the advisers whom he preferred. To Pitt, whom the King

<sup>1</sup> Though not an actual, it was a virtual, recall; inasmuch as the Duke of Newcastle entreated him to hurry back to England as his presence was "absolutely necessary," adding: "We want you to add weighty solidity, and firmness, to our system."—Newcastle Papers, 32, 709, f. 247. Ernst, 293.

cordially detested, they were bound, not only by promises, but by fear ;<sup>1</sup> so, to serve a double purpose, they requested that he should be taken into the administration as Secretary for War. The King at once fell into the trap. He objected to the appointment, and both Granville and Bath, whom he did not fail to consult, encouraged him not to yield. His answer was a distinct refusal ; whereupon nearly the whole Ministry, headed by the Earl of Harrington, to whom the Pelhams craftily transferred the task of leading the opposition, resigned. The King, much infuriated with the recusants, at once requested Bath and Granville to form a new administration. The task proved to be beyond their powers. No statesman of weight or influence would consent to serve with them ; and after many further endeavours to get together a decent Ministry, they were obliged to inform His Majesty that he had set them an impossible task. Having no alternative, the King, despite his intense chagrin, was forced to reinstate his former servants on whatever terms they would consent to take office. These terms proved to be not only the admission of Pitt, but the dismissal of all Bath and Granville's adherents. Both changes took effect. Pitt became Vice-Treasurer for Ireland, and afterwards Paymaster of the Forces, and a general clearance was made of the anti-Pelhamites. As might have been expected, the King's old dislike to the Duke of Newcastle and his brother was not lessened by this episode ; but it was upon Lord Harrington that the weight of royal displeasure chiefly fell ; and the position of that nobleman at length became so intolerable, both on this account and owing to the treatment which he experienced at the hands of the Duke of Newcastle, that he felt it impossible to remain Secretary of State. Meanwhile, the King's feelings toward Chesterfield had been undergoing a remarkable change. Both the Queen and Lord Hervey, who had carefully nursed his resentment

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 441.

against his old favourite, being dead, there was no longer any person much interested in keeping up the feud; and as a consequence, the amicable relations formerly existing between them had been to some extent renewed. Meetings had taken place at which Chesterfield's respectful advances were not ungraciously received, and the King had more than once shown his appreciation of the Earl's wit and charming manners. Moreover, His Majesty had been greatly pleased with Chesterfield's successful administration of his most troublesome dependency,<sup>1</sup> and began to think that a statesman who had given such proof of ability, and who was, besides, comparatively free from party ties, might be a useful counterpoise to those objectionable Pelham brothers. Accordingly, when Lord Harrington, mortified by the way in which the King treated him,<sup>2</sup> and resenting the feeble support given him by those for whom he had incurred the royal displeasure, at length resigned the seals (on 29 October, 1746), they were at once given to Chesterfield with His Majesty's approval; the Viceroyalty of Ireland being transferred to Lord Harrington. It may be as well to mention here that the new Lord-Lieutenant did not prove so acceptable to the people of Ireland as his predecessor had been. Stormy passages occurred between them during his tenure of office; and we read that, when he took leave of them, "Bonfires were lighted and a thousand insults offered to him at his departure."

It was against his own wish that Chesterfield resigned

<sup>1</sup> Chesterfield told Lord Marchmont (*Diary*, I, p. 182) that his conduct in Ireland had "quite softened the King to him, and particularly the letter he writ over here whereby he put a stop to Lord Kildare's regiment and the other 'mob regiments,' as he called them; and that whilst there, all his recommendations had been like as many nominations, not one having been refused." It was on the King's own proposal that the seals were offered to Chesterfield as "the fittest," if he was willing.—*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> The King used to treat Harrington, whenever he came to him, with the greatest incivility, calling him to the Duke of Newcastle a rascal, as he called the Duke a fool to him (Harrington).—*Marchmont Diary*, vol. I, p. 182.

the Lord-Lieutenancy to accept the seals. He had a serious illness soon after leaving Ireland, and this necessitated his going to Bath, from whence he did not return until the last day of October. Immediately on his arrival he was summoned to attend a meeting of the Cabinet, but begged to be excused, on the ground that his three months' absence hindered his being *au fait des affaires*. Next day he was informed that the King had appointed him to succeed Harrington; whereupon he remarked, with some heat, that he thought it very odd that this should have been done without his own wishes being consulted.<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Newcastle begged him to accept, being afraid lest, on his refusal, Lord Granville should be named; and Mr. Pelham declared that if he did not accept, he himself must resign, as he could trust no other." (The brothers were seldom so unanimous; according to Lord Marchmont they could not trust themselves to be civil to each other in conversation, and usually conversed through an intermediary.

<sup>1</sup> When the Duke of Newcastle spoke to Chesterfield of being Secretary he declined, saying, "he would keep Ireland as long as he was in place, for he liked it" (*Marchmont Diary*, vol. I, p. 183). There is little doubt that he would not have made the change but for the hope that he might, as Foreign Secretary, be able to bring about what his heart was set upon, a safe and honourable peace with France and Spain (Ernst, p. 322). And the most curious point in the whole affair was that, although he and the Duke of Newcastle had been on almost affectionate terms while he was Lord-Lieutenant, and that it was at the latter's entreaty he resigned the post for the Secretaryship (speaking for himself and his brother, the Duke described Lord Chesterfield as "the most honourable and most estimable friend that two men ever had"—*Newcastle Correspondence*, Letter to Chesterfield, 5 March, 1746), no sooner did he accept the seals than the Duke became jealous of him, and resorted to the same tactics by which Lord Harrington was driven from office—keeping up a private correspondence with Lord Sandwich, our plenipotentiary at The Hague, from which fact the Foreign Secretary was altogether excluded (*Ibid.*). On this fact becoming known, a report was published in the papers that Lord Sandwich was intended to supplant Chesterfield in the secretaryship. In alluding to it the latter remarks, in a letter to Dayrolles, "Many people, I believe, think that *my brother* [the Duke] will wear out my patience, as indeed he has most people's; but as I have a good deal, I may hold out longer than people think" (*Ibid.*, p. 324). It would seem, however, that he miscalculated his own powers in this respect, for the Duke's persistence, as usual, gained the day.



*Diary*, p. 223.) Thereupon he gave way, but insisted that, before definitely accepting, he should be granted a private interview with the King. At this interview he said that "he must capitulate with His Majesty; that as he came in to serve His Majesty, and not himself, he desired that whenever he found his services either not agreeable, or not useful to him (the King), he might take the liberty to resign the seals, without it being taken for an affront or disgust at the particular time." To which the King answered, "Then take the seals, for I can believe *you*"; which expression the King had often repeated since with particular emphaticalness.<sup>1</sup> From that time his relations with his royal master were, at least outwardly, satisfactory; indeed, he complained of being left somewhat too much to his own devices. "No real business," he observed, "was done in the Cabinet; there was no plan; and in differences of opinion the King bid them do what they thought fit, and continued very indolent, saying that it signified nothing, as his son, for whom he did not care a louse, was to succeed him, and would live long enough to ruin us all; so that there was no government at all."<sup>2</sup> It is quite possible, therefore, that the regret which he often professed for having given up the Irish Viceroyalty was genuine; for in that place, at any rate, he took care that there should be no lack of system.

The news of Chesterfield's appointment as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was received with especial satisfaction in Holland, by which republic he was regarded almost in the light of a personal friend. The United Provinces happened to be just then in a position so critical as to need all the friendly offices they could command. A divided government, a dissatisfied people, and, to crown all, an implacable enemy threatening invasion of their country, whose frontiers were, in consequence of the recent unfortunate campaign, almost defenceless, constituted a

<sup>1</sup> *Marchmont Diary*, vol. I, pp. 185-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

situation which filled them with alarm. There was indeed a congress being just then held at Breda, of which the ostensible object was to bring about a peace; but the dissensions which arose between the British and Imperial plenipotentiaries showed that they had not this object very much at heart, while at the same time there were no signs of any steps being taken to enable the Dutch to continue their resistance with much hope of success. In these circumstances the advent of Chesterfield to power was hailed as affording the best chance of extricating the States from their dilemma; as the well-known conciliatory powers of the new Secretary might be expected to prevail in inducing the plenipotentiaries to sink their differences, and, by concluding a peace, procure at least temporary safety for the country and the Government. They were, however, over-sanguine. England was fully committed to war before Chesterfield entered the administration. The plan of campaign even had been settled; and much against his will the new Secretary was obliged to further measures which he had previously opposed. It was not without a protest that he gave way; but he was silenced with the rejoinder that things had already gone too far in the direction of war to admit of change, and by the assurance that if the effort which the allies were now about to make should not prove effectual it would be the last. If the army of 140,000 men, to be commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, should not prevail against the inferior forces of France and Spain, then any terms of peace which those powers might offer would be accepted; and with this assurance he was obliged to be content. Chesterfield showed remarkable prescience in divining the course that affairs were bound to take. Writing to Dayrolles (12 January, 1748) he says, "Whether the tone of that court [i.e. of Holland] be peace or war, it differs only in point of time; for a peace there will necessarily be; if prudence makes it soon, it will be so much the better; but

if sanguine folly delays it, necessity will before it is long make it, and make a damned bad one." Words which were fulfilled to the letter.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be said fairly that Chesterfield fitted his new office so exactly as those which he had held previously, or that he gained in reputation by the change. Like a good many other famous statesmen, he was seen at his best in Opposition. Few or no opportunities were now given him for the display of that finished oratory which had made his name so famous. There were no burning questions just then before the Houses of Parliament. The country had sunk into an apathy about political affairs from which nothing—not even the ill-success which attended our arms—seemed capable of arousing it; and the dissolution of Parliament, in the summer of 1747, left the balance of parties pretty much what it had been before. Chesterfield performed his official duties with the carefulness that always distinguished him, and, when he was not hampered by his colleagues, with dispatch; but the Duke of Newcastle was a persistent thorn in his side. That nobleman might generally be relied on to obstruct, but never to support; and he had a way of backing out of his professions, and even his promises, which was sufficiently embarrassing. Henry Pelham would have been a more satisfactory colleague,

<sup>1</sup> It was with the object of furthering negotiations that he procured the appointment of Mr. Dayrolles as King's Resident at the Hague (Ernst, p. 319), an appointment which much displeased the Duke of Newcastle, who managed to have the Earl of Sandwich sent out to frustrate it. The Duke, according to his wont, was continually veering about between peace and war, unable to follow a steady policy. "I wish," writes Chesterfield to Dayrolles, "I could see a plan for either a vigorous war or a tolerable peace"; and he goes on to explain that, finding the helplessness of interference, he meddled very little, executed orders quietly, and gave no advice—a line of conduct which, to a man of his character, could not be long endurable, and the only advantage of which was that it seemed to please the King, who disliked any interference with his own warlike policy. "Their great point," says Chesterfield, "is to prevent any peace at all, thinking as vainly that the Republic has resources as the Duke of Newcastle thinks that he has abilities to carry on the war" (to Dayrolles, 25 August, 1747); and this great point was maintained by the Duke solely to give him leverage with the King.

for, if slow, he was both straightforward and honest ; but, like everybody else, was somehow neutralised by his incomprehensible brother. As for the King, he was resolved, since he could not have his favourite, Lord Granville, to give the Ministers their own way, because he saw they had the superiority.<sup>1</sup> "There was no business done on public days at Court," Chesterfield acknowledged, "the King hating to be kept from the company in the drawing-room, where he made it a rule to speak to every woman he knew";<sup>2</sup> but such favour as he accorded to the new Cabinet was now extended to the Duke of Newcastle, who had endeavoured to gain his confidence by advocating the prosecution of the war in spite of our own disasters and the French offers of peace. Chesterfield, as we have seen, was strongly in favour of accepting their offers ; but as they involved among other things the cession of Cape Breton, to which the Duke, without understanding in the least why, attached supreme importance, all his efforts to secure that end were frustrated, and Maréchal Saxe continued his old practice of thrashing the allies whenever and wherever he met them. Toil as he might, and the *Marchmont Papers* show how carefully he threaded the ramifications of continental intrigue, his efforts were set at naught by the inept dexterity of Newcastle. It has been often said that, with the view of counteracting the latter's influence, Chesterfield tried to govern the King through Lady Yarmouth, the royal mistress,<sup>3</sup> but there seems to be no

<sup>1</sup> *Marchmont Diary*, vol. I, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> The truth seems to be that Lady Yarmouth had no influence with the King in any matter connected with politics, though he sometimes granted applications made through her for appointments or preferments in order that she might make profit out of such transactions from those who solicited her interest. Thus we read in Walpole (*Correspondence*, vol. II, p. 91) that she "touched twelve thousand for Sir Jacob Bouverie's coronet." This will explain why in the case of his cousin, Lieutenant-Colonel Stanhope, Chesterfield may have resorted to her services ; and it will also explain why her intervention failed, namely because, owing to the opposition of the Pelhams, the questions were made to assume a political aspect. Had Chesterfield

sufficient ground for the allegation, any more than for the previous rumour of his having attempted to do so through Lady Suffolk.<sup>1</sup> The King, as every courtier must have known perfectly well, never allowed his mistresses, as he did his wife, to influence him in political matters; and beyond mere suspicion, there is not the least evidence that Chesterfield entertained any notion of the kind. By neither sympathy nor interest was he bound to the Prince of Wales, who, indeed, had committed himself exclusively to the guidance of one of the most contemptible men that ever took a prominent part in politics, *Bubb Dodington*. "I know him" (the Prince), he writes to Newcastle, "better than you do, and I know that he has neither love nor hatred in his temper, and those who are the worst with him to-day are as likely as those who are the best to be well with him to-morrow."<sup>2</sup> Pitt he seems to have distrusted. In fact, so far from employing tools of any kind or degree to further his purposes, he appears to have fought entirely with his own resources; and these proved inadequate to counteract the mysterious influence which the Duke of Newcastle exercised over a master that despised him. By this influence all his efforts to secure a peace were frustrated; and he was obliged, in direct opposition to his convictions, to urge the adoption of warlike measures on the Court of Vienna;<sup>3</sup> to invite the co-operation of Russia and Denmark, and to assure the United Provinces

anticipated this, he would have known perfectly well that she could be of no use; and no other instance appears of his having attempted to effect any object through her instrumentality. Though he sometimes paid her the compliment of asking her good offices for certain of his friends, this was a mere *façon de parler*. For instance, he writes to Dayrolles (24 June, 1748), "Pray how was Lady Yarmouth to you? I suppose particularly civil: she has promised me to do you all the service that she can; but indeed that is not much: I wish her power were equal to her good-nature." The only foundation given by Lord Mahon for the allegation is to be found at p. 394 of vol. II. of his history, and does not amount to much.

<sup>1</sup> *Suffolk Correspondence*, vol. II, pp. 84-5 n.

<sup>2</sup> *Newcastle Correspondence*, cited by Lord Carnarvon at p. xxvii.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Sir T. Robinson, 31 October, 1744.

of England's support in the conduct of the war. It is curious, however, to notice the exactitude with which he, though not a military man, foresaw the issues of the campaign. What, for instance, every one else deemed an impossibility, the capture of Bergen-op-Zoom, was foretold by him; and as to the general result, we find him prophesying: "Upon my soul, we shall be undone if we have not a peace, for I am sure we should not carry on the war better next year than we have done this. Give the Austrians what we please, they will always be grossly deficient; and let the Dutch take what vigorous resolutions they please, I fear they have not the means of enforcing them."<sup>1</sup> How exactly this prognostication was fulfilled is a matter of history. On 30 April, 1748, both English and Dutch were glad enough to conclude a treaty with France upon far less favourable terms than had been open to them at the time when it was uttered, and Chesterfield's foresight was fully justified. In matters of home policy we also find him endeavouring to exercise a restraining influence somewhat at variance with counsels he had urged before the responsibilities of office had exercised upon him that sobering influence which success produces upon all really able men.

When just after the suppression of "The '45 Rebellion" the question arose of what treatment should be adopted for those districts in which it had originated, he, being then in Ireland, recommended the most draconian measures of retaliation. In a private letter to the Duke of Newcastle we find him advocating such measures as "putting a price on the heads of the chiefs," "starving the whole country indiscriminately by a rigorous blockade," and "putting all to fire and sword." "I make no difficulty of declaring my opinion," he writes, "that the Commander-in-Chief should be ordered to give no quarter, but to

<sup>1</sup> To Dayrolles, 17 October, 1747.

pursue and destroy the rebels wherever he finds them.<sup>1</sup> . . . Were I to direct, I would have a short Act of Parliament for the transporting to the West Indies every man concerned in the Rebellion, and give a reward for every one that should be apprehended. . . . I own I cannot keep my temper when I reflect that twice within my time a country by which England can never be benefited should have put England to such an expense and trouble." But in 1747 Lord Marchmont found him all in favour of humanity. "Lord Chesterfield," he says, "was for schools and colleges to civilize the Highlands";<sup>2</sup> and this at a time when his colleagues, according to Lord Mahon, "thought only of measures of repression—the dungeon or the scaffold; disarming Acts, and Abolition Acts."<sup>3</sup> This inconsistency has surprised some of his biographers; but is no more unusual than what is often noticeable between the utterances of men speaking without actual responsibility, and of the same men when their words carry the weight of place and power. It is an inconsistency that we have found elsewhere between his spoken words and his acts; as, for instance, between his avowed policy towards the Papists in Ireland and the treatment which he accorded them when that policy took the shape of active measures. Indeed, during his whole career as Secretary of State, one is struck by a moderation, a calm, unobtrusive discharge of his functions, little to be expected from a man who had shown himself a perfect firebrand of opposition. His work at the Foreign Office—as to much of it, very intricate also, seeing that he had to deal with such difficult personages as the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria—was done so quietly that it has almost escaped the notice of historians, yet he more than once averted collisions which

<sup>1</sup> *Newcastle Correspondence*, 29 September, 5 October, and 2 November, 1745.

<sup>2</sup> *Marchmont Diary*, vol. I, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Mahon, vol. III, p. 488.

might have been attended with very serious consequences, considering the precarious relations existing between King George and his brother of Prussia.<sup>1</sup> In managing that exceedingly difficult personage, his own royal master, he displayed the same quiet effectiveness, avoiding argument as much as possible; and when he did employ it, taking refuge in merely reducing to absurdity the views which he was trying to combat—a mode of reasoning which always took the King's fancy. Soon after entering upon his duties as Secretary of State, it was necessary to procure the royal sanction to the appointment of a minister, whom he cordially detested, to one of the highest places. None of his colleagues daring to approach His Majesty upon the subject, Chesterfield was requested to undertake the perilous duty. Accordingly, he presented himself in the royal closet with the commission ready to be filled up; but as soon as he mentioned the appointee's name the King flew into a passion and refused his signature, exclaiming, "I would rather have the devil!" "With all my heart, sir," replied Chesterfield, "I only beg leave to remind your Majesty that the commission is made out 'To our most trusty and well-beloved cousin.'"<sup>2</sup> Whereupon the King could only laugh, saying, "My lord, do as you please," and the appointment was made without more objection.

A difficulty having arisen out of one of the many squabbles between His Majesty and the King of Prussia, the royal assent was stoutly refused to the appointment of a new Envoy at Berlin to replace one who had been somewhat ignominiously dismissed from that Court. "The King of Prussia is a *fripon*," stormed King George. "I

<sup>1</sup> As an instance of this may be cited the recall of Mr. Lawrence, our Envoy at Berlin, at the request of the King of Prussia. King George was so incensed at this that for a long time he refused to appoint any Envoy in his place, and at last only did so at the urgent representation of Chesterfield. —*Marchmont Diary*, 29 November, 1747.

<sup>2</sup> Maty, p. 285 n.



wish he was Cham of Tartary!" Whereupon Chesterfield protested that he wished the same; but that, inasmuch as he happened to be King of Prussia, the more he was a *fripon* the more necessary it was to have a minister at his Court to keep an eye upon his doings." The King did not take this amiss, but still remained obstinate, only giving way when the Duke of Newcastle talked him over.<sup>1</sup> And this incident was quite typical of the sort of influence which Chesterfield possessed. No one could venture upon such liberties with his royal master, whom he generally succeeded in putting into good humour; but at the same time the King rarely allowed himself to be swayed, except by the Duke of Newcastle—the man whom he affected to despise. The other Ministers were not long in detecting this, and Chesterfield's weight in the Cabinet rapidly declined, until at last he appears to have become, what he never was before, a mere "nobody." How conscious he was of the fact and how thoroughly it galled him, is evident from his confidences to the few whom he trusted, notably Dayrolles. "Lord Sandwich," he writes, "has for some time made his option between the Duke of Newcastle and myself, and I suppose he thinks he has chosen the best, in which, however, he may some time or other find himself mistaken. Bentinck follows his example, and never comes near me nor speaks to me about business, though in my province, but confers wholly with his Grace.<sup>2</sup> . . . If they (the Bentincks) mean, *by my having nothing to say at Court*, that my opinion does not prevail there, they are very much in the right, and I should be very sorry that the measures which do prevail should be supposed to be mine.<sup>3</sup> . . . Neither the state of foreign or domestic affairs will permit me to continue much longer

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> To S. Dayrolles, 25 August, 1747. The Earl of Sandwich had been appointed Ambassador to Holland, and Count Bentinck was the representative of the States-General.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 October, 1747.

in my present situation. I cannot go on writing orders of which I see and foretell the fatal tendency. I can no longer take my share of either the public indignation or contempt on account of measures in which I have no share. I can no longer continue in a post in which it is well known that I am but a *commis*, and in which I have not been able to do any one service to any one man, though ever so meritorious, lest I should be supposed to have any power, and my colleague not the whole.<sup>1</sup> . . . You judge very right in thinking that it must be very disagreeable to tug at the oar with one who cannot row, and yet will be paddling so as to hinder you from rowing."<sup>2</sup> To a man of Chesterfield's stamp such a position was intolerable; he determined to vacate it on the first opportunity, and, as was his wont, soon created that opportunity for himself. His cousin, Lieutenant-Colonel Stanhope, who was then employed in Scotland, desired to obtain the colonelcy of a regiment which had lately fallen vacant, and also the appointment of aide-de-camp to the King. Chesterfield warmly supported his application by making what was almost a personal appeal to the Duke of Newcastle, and likewise by resorting to the influence of Lady Yarmouth, but without effect. The King gave away five regiments and appointed two aides-de-camp, always passing over Stanhope's name as if on purpose. This slight decided Chesterfield, who said that "he saw it was done to show that he had no credit, and to tell everybody not to apply to him if they wanted anything."<sup>3</sup> He exhibited no pique, but made his preparations to resign so quietly that the matter was actually accomplished before the rumour of his contemplating such a step had spread. As a preliminary to resignation, he drew up a state paper setting forth the dangers of the war and the necessity of taking serious measures to close it.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 January, 1748.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 October, 1747.

<sup>3</sup> *Marchmont Diary*, pp. 225, 263.

Finding that, as he no doubt expected, his colleagues in the Ministry refused their concurrence, he, on 6 February, 1748, waited upon the King, to whom he formally tendered back the seals.<sup>1</sup> His Majesty urged him strongly to retain office, expressing at the same time his satisfaction at the manner in which he had filled it. Chesterfield's answer was that he found that he could not continue to be a useful servant of His Majesty in that place, and consequently his honour and conscience would not permit him to retain it; that his influence was no longer of any weight, and that even His Majesty seemed not to be at liberty to distinguish those who had his service most at heart, which was, of course, an allusion to Colonel Stanhope's affair. The King, however, took no notice of this free speaking; and finding remonstrances of no avail, signified his intention of recognizing the departing secretary's services by some mark of distinction, and gave him his choice of a pension or a dukedom.<sup>2</sup> Chesterfield declined both; but to show that he did not retire in ill-humour, accepted a seat at the Board of Admiralty for his brother, John Stanhope, and so the matter was settled. There is not the least ground for question that the reasons which he alleged for retiring were the true ones. He found that, owing to the secret influence wielded by that astonishing Duke of Newcastle, he was himself a mere cipher in the administration, and that was a position which all his life long had been intolerable to him; if he could not be an efficient minister, he declined to be one at all, and he truly disclaims all other motives for his action. Writing to his friend Dayrolles three days after the event, he says:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> To Dayrolles he writes: "I resigned the Seals last Saturday to the King, who parted with me most graciously, and (I may add, for he said so himself) with regret"; and a few days after, in a letter to Madame de Monconseil (15 February, 1748), he declares that the true reasons for his resignation of the seals were simply "*l'amour du repos, et la soin de ma santé, qui en exigeoit.*"

<sup>2</sup> Maty, 309.

<sup>3</sup> 9 February, 1748.

"Various and absurd reports will, I know, be stirring upon this event. I cannot help that, and must pay that tax as well as other people. One of these reports I am sure will be, and indeed in some measure already is, that my ambition was boundless; and that because I could not be everything, I would be nothing, to which I shall only answer that if such were my ambition, staying in Court were a much more likely way of gratifying it than going out, and that my chance was far from being a bad one if I would have tried it, as an ambitious man would certainly have done. . . . Could I do any good, I would sacrifice some more quiet to it; but convinced as I am that I can do none, I will indulge my ease and preserve my character. . . . Far from engaging in opposition, as resigning Ministers too commonly do, I shall to the utmost of my power support the King and his Government, which I can do with more advantage to them and more honour to myself when I do not receive £5000 a year for doing it."<sup>1</sup> It was, in fact, impossible for a self-respecting Minister to continue in office then if his views did not happen to coincide with those of the omnipotent Duke;<sup>2</sup> and it is not a little remarkable that Chesterfield's predecessor in the seals, Lord Harrington, had been driven from office in precisely the same way. For what decided him to resign was the discovery that Lord Sandwich, our representative at The Hague, was actually carrying on a private correspondence with the Duke of Newcastle upon matters exclusively within the province of the Foreign Secretary. Chesterfield grimly comments upon the ducal machinations as follows: "The

<sup>1</sup> Mahon, vol. III, pp. 305-6.

<sup>2</sup> It is unnecessary to do more than allude to a pamphlet, believed to be written by Lord Marchmont in conjunction with Lord Chesterfield, entitled *An Apology for a Late Resignation*, which created much sensation at the time, and, as Walpole tells us, nearly caused Lord Marchmont the loss of his place; as Lord Chesterfield assures Dayrolles upon his word and honour that not only had he no hand in it directly or indirectly, but that he could not even guess who the author was. (To Dayrolles, 8 April, 1748. Ernst, p. 345.)



*William Hoare Pinxt, 1752*

*Richard Houston Fecit.*

THE RIGHT HONBLE. HENRY PELHAM, FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF  
YE TREASURY CHANCELLOR, AND UNDER TREASURER OF THE EX-  
CHEQUER, ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONBLE. PRIVY COUNCIL,  
AND ONE OF THE LORDS OF THE REGENCY



Duke of Newcastle has taken my department (in truth he had it before), and the new Secretary, whoever he shall be, will have the Southern (secretaryship). The difficulty is where to get one; some talk of the Duke of Bedford, to hold it till Lord Sandwich can come from the Congress, but nobody is yet fixed. Whoever it shall be, I will venture to prophesy that he will not agree with his colleagues so long as I did."<sup>1</sup> A curious result of the whole affair was that, once having got rid of him, the Pelham Ministry rapidly adopted the very policy he had been advocating. Their conversion was, in fact, owing to the inordinate demands for pecuniary aid made by the Dutch, as to which the King drily remarked, "Chesterfield told me six months ago that it would be so." At any rate, preliminaries of peace were signed at Aix-la-Chapelle within two months after his leaving office. Chesterfield alludes to this fact with pardonable self-complacency. "My resignation," he says, "made this peace, as it opened people's eyes with relation to the imminent dangers of the war, and made the continuation of it too strong a measure for one Minister to stand. As a proof of this, I resigned on the 6th of February last, and on the 9th Lord Sandwich had orders sent him to make the best peace that he could, but to make any rather than none."<sup>2</sup> Nor is it by any means improbable that this solution was the true one, as the Duke of Newcastle's well-known nervousness and precipitancy were very likely to have hurried him into the adoption of any measures, however inconsistent with his former policy.

<sup>1</sup> It is amusing, but no matter of wonder, to find that, having got rid of Chesterfield, the Duke of Newcastle forthwith came to loggerheads with his quondam protégé, the Earl of Sandwich.

<sup>2</sup> To Dayrolles, 13 May, 1848.

## IX

### THE LEISURE OF A MAN OF ACTION

**T**HE regret which most public men experience when the time comes for their retirement from the conduct of affairs was most certainly not evinced by Chesterfield. However artificial the man may have been, he was singularly free from affectation; and the relief which he declares to have been the only feeling that possessed him when his resignation of the seals was accepted is undoubtedly genuine. In a letter to Dayrolles, written from Bath, whither he had gone to recruit his shattered health, he thus unbosoms himself: "Without affectation, I feel most sensibly the comforts of my present free and quiet situation; and if I had much vanity in my composition, of which I really think that I have less than most people, even that vanity would be fully gratified by the voice of the public upon this occasion. But, upon my word, all the busy tumultuous passions have subsided in me; and that not so much from philosophy as from a little reflection upon a great deal of experience. I have been behind the scenes, both of pleasure and business. I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move all the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant audience."<sup>1</sup> Of course, had matters been ordered differently while he held office; had there been no Duke of Newcastle, for instance, neutralizing all

<sup>1</sup> 9 and 23 February, 1748. Bradshaw, p. 851.



his efforts to promote his country's interest ; had he seen any prospect of becoming more than the mere political cipher to which the inexplicable Duke succeeded in reducing each of his colleagues—he was not the man to forsake his post. But the consciousness that he was enjoying the pay and privileges of a station which, through no fault of his, had become virtually a sinecure ; that he was being treated as a mere negligible quantity by those who possessed power without the sense to use it ; that he must stand by and see things done, on his responsibility, against which his soul revolted ; that he could himself do nothing except by means unworthy of a man of spirit ; that he was more powerless alike to protect, to hinder, or to advance, than one of the Duke's menial servants, became at last so galling as to be intolerable. Besides, he was greatly changed. Patriotism remained, but ambition had fled ; his mental energies were unimpaired, but his physical strength was broken. He longed for quiet and ease, for the calm delights of cultured leisure, for society which he could select for himself without reference to political considerations. Why should he give up these to continue a game which he had found not worth the candle, and at which he had dishonest partners ? Upon the whole, it was perfectly natural that he should fling down his cards as he did.

He was now fifty-four, and old at that ; the gouty attacks from which he had so long suffered were recurring with alarming frequency, a troublesome giddiness in the head rendered the continuous transaction of public business most irksome, and symptoms of approaching age showed him that parliamentary life might soon become a closed book to him. After a calm review of all the circumstances he determined not to wait until incapacity necessitated an ignominious withdrawal from the scene, but to quit it with his reputation still unimpaired ; and he made the change at once and completely. His first step

back into the shade of unofficial life was a curious one. During the whole period of his public employments he had never touched a card, and most people thought that his old passion for play had died out; but on the evening of the very day on which he resigned the seals he reappeared at "White's" and quietly resumed the pursuit which had been interrupted for four years. Having thus provided for his nights, he devised employment for his days in the fascinating but expensive company of bricks-and-mortar. The great house in South Audley Street which still bears his name had been in course of construction for some time, and he found the superintending of its completion a most congenial task.<sup>1</sup> He is ever writing about it to his friends, Madame de Monconseil and Mr. Dayrolles. To the former he confesses: "Je me ruine actuellement à bâtir une assez belle maison ici, qui sera finie à la Française, avec force sculptures et dorures," and he gives her the following description of an apartment therein, which he desires to call his *boudoir*: "La boiserie et la plafond sont d'un beau bleu, avec beaucoup de sculptures; les tapisseries et les chaises sont d'un ouvrage à fleurs au petit-point, d'un dessein magnifique sur au fond blanc: par dessus la cheminée, que est de *Giallo di Sienna*, force glaces, sculptures, dorures, et au milieu le portrait d'une très belle femme, peint par Rosalba"; for the further adornment of which sumptuous retreat the lady sent him the suggestive present of "a pair of porcelain arms." To Dayrolles he writes: "My only amusement is my new house, which has now taken some form both within and without. There is but one disagreeable circumstance that attends it, which is the expense. . . . I have yet finished nothing but my *boudoir* and my library;

<sup>1</sup> It was designed for him by the celebrated Palladian architect, Isaac Wase; and, as everybody knows, has been extensively mutilated by a purchaser who acquired it some quarter of a century since for £175,000. It now forms the town residence of Lord Burton.

the former is the gayest and most cheerful room in England, the latter the best. My garden is now turfed, planted and sown, and will in two months more make a scene of verdure and flowers not common in London"; and he loads his friend with commissions to buy pictures of the old masters, and other articles of *vertu* for the adornment of the mansion. In a letter to his son (26 July, 1748) he expresses his delight because "Mr. Lyttelton approves of my new house, and particularly of my *canonical* pillars."<sup>1</sup> He is always full of the subject; nor is there any dispute that he showed the most consummate taste in the arrangement and decoration of his new house. It is plain that he laughed at his own earnestness in the matter, for he writes to Chevenix (28 December, 1749): "I have not yet been able to get the workmen out of my house in town and shall have the pleasure of their company some months longer. One would think that I liked them, for I am now full of them at Blackheath, where I am adding a gallery. *Il ne faut jamais faire les sottises à demi.*" With these amusements and the culture of his melons and *ananas*, as he prefers to call pine-apples, he managed to pass the time agreeably. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* (said to be Lord Brougham) describes the library as it existed in 1845: "What he boasted of as 'the finest [the "best"] room in London'—and perhaps even now it remains unsurpassed—his spacious and beautiful library, looking on the finest private garden in London. The walls are covered half-way up with rich and classical stores of literature; above the cases are, in close series, the portraits of eminent authors, French and English, with most of whom he had conversed: Over

<sup>1</sup> A punning allusion to the hall pillars, which with the marble hall floor and staircase with double flights, were bought at the sale of the Duke of Chandos's place at Canons. There was also a huge lantern of copper-gilt, bought at the sale of Sir R. Walpole's place, Houghton, on which Fielding wrote a ballad in the *Craftsman* ("The Norfolk Lanthorn").

these and immediately under the massive cornice, extend all round in foot-long capitals the Horatian lines :—

Nunc veterum libris. Nunc somno et inertibus horis.  
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ.

On the mantelpiece and cabinets stand busts of old orators, interspersed with voluptuous vases and bronzes, antique or Italian, and airy statuettes in marble or alabaster of nude or semi-nude opera nymphs." The room is still there, very little altered, but the exquisite gardens which its windows overlooked are shorn of their glory, the intelligent purchaser of the mansion having leased a portion of them for building purposes, and "Chesterfield Gardens" of the present day is simply a row of modern houses; whilst, with consistent good taste, the purchaser aforesaid pulled down the classical colonnade and devoted the land occupied by the stabling and kitchen offices to the same utilitarian purpose. Nor did Chesterfield House monopolise the whole of its owner's architectural experiments. By the death of his brother, John Stanhope, the seven years' lease of a villa in which the latter had resided at Blackheath devolved upon the Earl, who took up his quarters there while his London mansion was approaching completion.<sup>1</sup> From disliking the place at first, he afterwards elected to make it his summer residence, and managed to spend a great deal of money in improvements there. He obtained an extension of the lease, built a handsome gallery, with other additions; and in compliment to Madame de Monconseil, christened it *Babiole*.<sup>2</sup> "Je suis actuellement," he

<sup>1</sup> The house in Mayfair, when completed, reflected much credit upon both the architect and the owner. Walpole, who was hard to please, and not over friendly to Chesterfield, owns that "it is really most magnificent" (to Sir Horace Mann, 27 February, 1752).

<sup>2</sup> "Babiole" was the equivalent of "Bagatelle," the name of Mme. de Monconseil's country house near Paris.

"Blackheath is skirted on its North side by the old mellow-brick wall of Greenwich Park. Outside the gate of that steepest of all parks stood Montagu House, whence the Earl of Chesterfield wrote those famous letters to his son. It is gone now, pulled down, and its site is now a part of the Heath."—*The*

writes her, "pour me retablir, à une très petite maison, que j'ai à cinq petites milles de Londres, et que j'aurais appelé *Bagatelle*, si ce n'eut été par respect pour la votre ; mais que j'appelle *Babiole* pour en marquer la subordination, et pour laisser à Bagatelle la préférence qui lui est due. Il y fait toujours sec, et l'air y est extrêmement fin." *Babiole* became his favourite place of residence in the summer months, and is also alluded to in his letters as *La Petite Chartreuse*. The seclusion of Blackheath seems to have been what he most cared for. Writing to Dayrolles (6 April, 1753), he says: "I am now, for the first time in my life, impatient for the summer that I may go and hide myself at Blackheath and converse with my vegetables *d'égal à égal*, which is all that a deaf man can pretend to. . . . The place agrees with my health and becomes my present situation. It employs my eyes, my own legs and my horse's agreeably without having any demand upon my ears, so that I almost forget sometimes I have lost them."

To vary his amusements, and also for health's sake, while these two residences were in process of completion, we find him making occasional excursions, and a flying visit or two to some of his friends. "I go to Cheltenham to-morrow," he writes Dayrolles (20 July, 1748), "for a fortnight or three weeks, not for any present want of health, but by way of preservative against the autumn, when I am wont to have fevers. . . . In about a fortnight I shall go for a week to Lord Pembroke's at Wilton, which will be my last excursion for this year, and then I shall settle in my new

*Dover Road*, by C. G. Harper, p. 49. This is quite wrong. Chesterfield's villa was not the house known as Montague House, but what is now known as the "Ranger's Lodge" on "Chesterfield Walk," on the south-west side of Greenwich Park, facing the Heath. Montague House stood immediately south of Ranger's Lodge, and was pulled down in 1815, but the name is preserved in "Montague Corner" at the south-east end of Chesterfield Walk. It was the residence of Caroline, Princess of Wales, who was appointed Ranger of Greenwich Park in 1806 (see Thornton's *Environs of London*).

house under the protection of Baron Trenck.”<sup>1</sup> Then he tells Madame de Monconseil (30 July, 1748): “Dans six semaines j’espère d’être établi tant bien que mal dans mon hôtel où à la fin je serai bien logé. J’ai accommodé le plupart de mes chambres entièrement à la Française. J’ai une grande cour et un grand jardin, deux choses très rare dans cette ville, quoique très commune à Paris.” And again to Dayrolles (16 August, 1748): “I received your last while I was at Wilton, which place Pem [Lord Pembroke] has improved so much that I hardly knew it again. It is now in my mind the finest seat in England. I am returned to a very empty town, which I can bear with very well: for if I have not all the company that I should like, I am at least secure from any company that I do not like, which is not the case of any one place in England but London. Besides, I have time both to read and to think; the first I like; the latter I am not, as too many are, afraid of. The rest of the day is employed in riding and fitting up my house; which I assure you takes a good deal of time, now that we are come to the minute parts of finishing and furnishing.” Then (on 11 October, 1748) we have him writing from Bath to the same friend: “I received your letter just as I was setting out for this place. I had been much out of order for above a month; languors and vertigos succeeded each other, the latter attended with sickness at my stomach. I underwent the discipline of the faculty to little purpose; who at last pronouncing that the seat of my disorder was the stomach, sent me here. I have already received advantage from these waters, though I have drunk them but four days; which convinces me that they will set me quite right.” Then ensues a long disquisition upon continental politics, from which he suddenly breaks off to the subject which we can see chiefly engrosses him. “But be all this as it will,” he says, “my *boudoir* and my library, which are my two objects, will never be the

<sup>1</sup> Baron Trenck was a favourite dog, the gift of Dayrolles.

worse for it. And I maintain that both of them will be, in their different kinds, the completest things in England, as I hope you will soon have ocular proof of." Picture-buying, too, engaged a good deal of his attention at this time: but the zeal of the art-collector is remarkably tempered with the prudence of a man of the world. He does not incline to spend much money upon his gallery, and insists upon getting his money's worth. The rule upon which he acts is: "No pictures, which are not bargains, of the acknowledged great masters, and of these none but those whose authenticity is indisputable." Thus he writes to Dayrolles (4 November, 1748): "*A propos* of money, as I believe it is much wanted by many people even of fashion both in Holland and Flanders, I should think it very likely that many good pictures of Rubens, Teniers, and other Flemish and Dutch masters may be picked up now at reasonable rates. If so, you are likely to hear of it as a *virtuoso*; and if so, I should be glad to profit of it, as an humble *dilettante*. I have already, as you know, a most beautiful landscape by Rubens and a pretty little piece of Teniers; but if you could meet with a large capital history, or allegorical piece, of Rubens with the figures as big as the life, I could go pretty deep to have it, as also for a large and capital picture of Teniers. But I would give a good deal for them if they were indisputably eminent, I would not give three pence for them unless they were so. . . . The family-piece which you mention, by Vandyke, I would not give six shillings for. . . . I will buy no more till I happen to meet with some very capital ones of some of the most eminent old Italian Masters, such as Raphael, Guido, Correggio, etc., and in that case I would make an effort." And some time after (25 May, 1750) he writes to the same, with reference to a Holy Family, attributed to Titian, which he had purchased from the Chapter at Rheims: "My fine Titian has turned out an execrable bad copy. By good luck, the condition of the obligation was such that, if certain good

judges at Paris should declare it either a copy or essentially damaged, the Chapter of Rheims was to take it back again, I paying the carriage. This has happened ; and the best painters in Paris pronounced it not only a copy, but a damned one ; so that I am only in for the carriage back." He does not seem to have relied very much on Dayrolles' judgment after all ; for he had two principal art-judges in London to advise him ; one being the well-known Sir Luke Schaub, and the other a French art critic of the highest water, M. Harenc, who resided near his lordship at Blackheath. The prices which he tenders for *chefs-d'œuvre* would raise a smile at Christie's nowadays, but were apparently thought not illiberal at the time, and we must do him the justice to say that he counsels Dayrolles, should he meet with a masterpiece, not to miss it "for fifty pounds more or less."

Amid all this fever at the great house *Babiole* is not forgotten. "I am very much *par voies et par chemins* between London and Blackheath," he informs Dayrolles, "but much more at the latter, which is now in great beauty. The shell of my gallery is finished, which, by three bow-windows, gives me three different, and the finest, prospects in the world." He is seized with a passion for gardening, and beseeches Dayrolles to send him "some seed of the right Cantelupe melons. It is for Blackheath that I want it, where you can easily judge that my melon ground is most exceedingly small." In fact, as he never did things by halves, he seems to have become about this time completely metamorphosed from an artificial man of the world into quite an average personage with simple, healthy tastes impartially divided between town and country life. Thus he writes from Blackheath to Dr. Chevenix : "I have been a country gentleman a great while, for me, that is ; for I have now been a fortnight together at Blackheath and stay there a few days longer. The *furor hortensis* has seized me, and my acre of ground here affords me more



pleasure than Kingdoms do to Kings; for my object is not to extend, but to enrich it. My gardener calls me, and I must obey" (Ernst, p. 427). In vain were overtures made to induce him once more to assume the cares and dignities of office. The Duke of Newcastle, having by this time tired of his former pet, the Duke of Bedford, was now exceedingly anxious to get rid of the latter: so much so, in fact, as to inform his brother<sup>1</sup> that, provided Bedford were eliminated from the Cabinet, he had no objection to Granville and Chesterfield being brought in. He had his doubts, he owned, about Chesterfield, who might "fly out" against his foreign policy; nevertheless, he thought that Granville would keep the latter in check; but the offer, if it was made, was not accepted. Even previously to this, we have it on the authority of Horace Walpole (Letter to Mann, 19 December, 1750) that overtures had been made to Lord Chesterfield to be President of the Council, which he declined, "for he says he cannot hear causes as he is grown deaf." What time he could spare from the engrossing avocations described above was chiefly devoted to correspondence with his son, whose education was then supposed to be receiving those finishing touches that a continental training could, in the father's opinion, alone impart. The young fellow, then about seventeen, had spent two years at the Universities of Lausanne and Leipsic, accompanied by his bear-leader, the Rev. Mr. Harte. His vacations were passed at Dresden, under the fostering care of his father's witty friend, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, who was then Envoy at that Court. He also paid a short visit to Berlin (where, for his father's sake, everybody was kind to him), and thence to Vienna. It was intended that he should make a long stay at Turin, of which, as a polishing medium, Chesterfield had a very high opinion, but, while passing through the Tyrol, was attacked by inflammation of the lungs, which

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Mr. H. Pelham of 2 September, 1751.

upset this project and necessitated a resort to the milder climates of Venice, Rome, and Naples, at each of which places his fond parent took care that he should have the best introductions. For example, he obtained and sent letters of recommendation for him to the Duke of Nivernois, the French Ambassador at Rome, who would show him "what manners and graces are"; and it was settled that afterwards he should go to Paris to be placed in La Guérinière's Academy there, "*pour le dégourdir, le dégraisser et le décrotter.*" The boy was a good boy enough, though not in the way that his anxious father wished him to be: amiable, but awkward; well-looking, but uncouth; proficient at all studies save that particular one to which his father attached most importance, the study of human nature. Every one spoke well of him, but most owned that he wanted—they could not well say what, but his father knew perfectly what they meant. Young Mr. Stanhope paid a long visit to his father in the autumn of 1751, and in a letter to his friend Major Irvine (1 September, 1751), the latter confesses to some disappointment. "My young man," he says, "has been with me here this fortnight, and in most respects I am very well satisfied with him; his knowledge is sound and extensive, and by all that I have yet observed, his heart is what I could wish it. But for his air and manners Paris has still a great deal to do." Also to Dayrolles (5 October): "What I labour at most, and find the most difficulty in, is to give him *les manières, la politesse, et la tournure*, of a man of fashion"; and to Madame Monconseil (7 October): "Je vous l'avouerai votre petit ambassadeur à son premier abord me frappa furieusement, non par les graces qui l'accompagnaient, mais par son air et ses manières. Je ne comprends pas encore où il les avoit pêchés" (*Ibid.*). So, although his tutor, Mr. Harte, was loud in his praise, Chesterfield thought it expedient to take him from the care of that worthy

pedant (for whom he obtained a canonry at Windsor) and to place him at once under La Guérinière, who might be trusted to impart a different sort of learning. Meanwhile, he himself continued to ply the boy with instructions which bore no fruit save the unmerited ruin of his own moral reputation. In those *Letters* which an accepted authority has described as inculcating the morals of a person who is not supposed to have any morals at all, and the manners of a dancing-master, he tried his very hardest to rid the boy of those idiosyncrasies which must have proved fatal to his advancement in the career which he had chosen for him. Diffidence, *gaucherie*, *mauvaise-honte*, moral scrupulousness, simplicity, candour, etc., may be pardonable, nay, some of them even estimable qualities, in one who follows the more secluded paths of life; but they are a poor stock-in-trade for a diplomatist to start with, and it was for the diplomatic service that young Stanhope was designed. His father knew the requirements for success in that service, as it existed at the time, better than perhaps any man of his day; and as the boy was now of an age to look the world full in the face, to see men and women as they are, not as they profess themselves to be, he put a glass in his hand which would enable his vision to pierce through that atmosphere of conventionality and sham which, like the air surrounding a planet, shrouds the dark body within from full disclosure. The *Letters* were written for a special person, and with a special purpose. It is not fair to describe them as that which they were never intended to be—a code of morality.<sup>1</sup> They form simply an elementary textbook of diplomacy, and the moral questions on which they necessarily touch are simply collateral issues treated solely with a view to the particular end proposed. That which had to be con-

<sup>1</sup> Has it never occurred to Chesterfield's censors that there might be some incongruity in the father of an illegitimate child posing to that child in the light of a stern moralist?

sidered was the world—not as it ought to be, but as it is ; and the young man had to be equipped with, and taught to use, weapons similar to those wielded by the antagonists whom he must encounter there. How diplomatic warfare was conducted at the time every student of eighteenth-century history is aware, and we fancy that very few of these will maintain that morality, as it is now understood, held a place on the field. It may be asked, Why, then, did Chesterfield select such a career for his only child? The answer is, that he simply did what nine fathers in every ten would have done in the circumstances, namely, chose that line in which he was most capable of advancing the youth's interests, and which presented the best chance of a distinguished career ; nor, indeed, was there any other to which similar objections might not have been urged. It is not too much to say that there never was a period in which the morality of all professions stood lower than the early Georgian. Allowing for some bright exceptions, which, thank Heaven, are never wholly wanting even in the worst times, society was rotten from top to bottom. The Court scarcely affected common decency ; the Ministry followed suit, and as for the professions, even the most sacred of them was tinged with the prevailing laxity.<sup>1</sup> It is an unsavoury theme to dwell upon, and there is no good purpose to be served by quoting instances which must be familiar to all who have read Walpole or Hervey ; but what is to be said of a prelate of the Established Church who complimented Queen Caroline upon having “ the good sense not to object to her husband keeping mistresses ” ? If Chesterfield recommended the practice of gallantry to his son—and it is for this that he is especially condemned—he was merely advocating conformity with the usages of the polite world, not with the object of encouraging vicious indulgence, but as the only means of acquiring those graces and that social influence

<sup>1</sup> See Walpole, *Letters*, vol. VII, p. 472.

which intercourse with a society, in which women who made a profession of gallantry were the ruling power, could alone bestow. It was the school in which he had been trained himself, and that with a success which made it natural for him to recommend it to others. His advice amounted to this: "You will doubtless live as other young men of your set do" (and how they lived was no secret), "but avoid promiscuous amours, which are ruinous in every way; attach yourself to some accomplished woman of high rank who will take an interest in forming your manners, who will introduce you into the best society, and advance your progress in the particular profession selected for you; do everything you can to fix her regard, but if other *bonnes fortunes* come in your way, you will be a fool to reject them; for remember it is of vital importance to your success that you should have as many influential friends of both sexes as possible." It was not high morality—indeed, it was not morality of any kind; but considering the manner of the time, it was very sound sense, such as a worldly mentor—which was all that Chesterfield professed to be—might consider himself fully justified in giving to a young fellow who had to make his way in life.

As to Johnson's other animadversion upon the *Letters*, perhaps the sage of Bolt Court was not the best possible judge on points of good breeding, at any rate we should be inclined to think that Lord Chesterfield was the better of the two; and if the latter lays what may appear undue stress upon certain *minutiæ* of deportment, it should be recollected that he was addressing an unlicked cub whose natural awkwardness was accentuated by dreamy indifference to, and forgetfulness of, the most elementary canons of propriety. It is to this fact that we must attribute the tiresome iteration which forms the chief blemish of these letters from a literary point of view—a blemish for which Chesterfield is unjustly held responsible. He

wrote each letter on the spur of the moment, just as it occurred to him (either from what was said by the boy himself or by some of the numerous correspondents whom he asked to look after him) that a warning or direction was needed ; and therefore he keeps on saying the same thing over and over again. The *Letters*, so far from being intended for publication, were only placed before the public, by a gross breach of faith, after his death ; he had never corrected or revised them—in fact he never did so with any of his letters ; they were not intended for any eyes but those of the person to whom they were addressed, and to whom he talks with that absence of reserve which is rarely exhibited except in the closest family relations. Had he contemplated giving them to the world, he would no doubt have polished, condensed, suppressed, and altered many things in them. Yet, owing to the irony of fate, it is by these raw, unpremeditated, incautious *Letters* that his literary powers are gauged, his morality judged, his reputation decided. The wonder is that they have stood the test of publicity so well ; that a man of the world—and of *such* a world !—unbosoming himself of his experiences for the benefit of a young fellow, who, he expected, was about to travel over the same paths that he had followed, has left so little to his own discredit. After reading these *Letters*, we ask ourselves, In spite of all that has been said to his disadvantage, is he so very bad ? Is he worse than the average man of his own time ? Nay, is he worse than many of the men who pass muster for good-enough fellows nowadays ? He is no saint, that's certain ; but is he such a very remarkable sinner after all ? Is not his philosophy practised in the spirit by many who object to it in the letter. He is stupid, to be sure, at times, and twaddles unmercifully, but as for his exceptional immorality, "*que sçait.*"

The oddest thing about the correspondence is that Chesterfield is manifestly honest and sincere in believing

that he is inculcating sound morality; and this may be explained by his open recognition of the generally suppressed fact that most people lead double lives; that the moral standard which they admit should govern their private and personal relations is widely different from that which they bring with them into the great world of public life, of state business, of trade, commerce, and those other relations in which there is a struggle of wits between competitors for success. The same men who are fair, candid, straightforward, and, so to put it, *moral* in their dealings as private citizens, will often be found artificial, over-reaching, tricky, and unscrupulous when they step upon the stage of the world's great theatre of action. In private life, that very Duke of Newcastle who plays so queer a part in the history of that age was an honest, kindly gentleman; in the Cabinet he was a perfect Judas. It matters little that there are, and have been, notable exceptions who have carried into all the relations of life the same dominant and unswerving moral principle; these exceptions are too few to upset a fact which must be evident to every one who has studied men and history. Keep it in the background as we will, the truth is that the great majority of mankind act upon the rule that the morality of the closet is not that of public life; and Chesterfield must not be blamed unduly for openly recognizing that which less candid humanity agrees to ignore. This explains what would otherwise appear to be a disingenuous inconsistency in the letters to his son. The earlier ones are brimful of what, making due allowances, may be termed a very respectable morality, such as any honest father would impress upon his child; the latter, addressed to the same youth on his having reached a time of life when he must enter the world of men, are widely different, because they are intended to carry instructions for enabling him to hold his own against those who did not suffer themselves to be deterred by moral scruples. The differ-

ence is explicitly referred to by himself in such letters as the following: "While you were a child, I endeavoured to form your heart habitually to virtue and honour, before your understanding was capable of showing you their beauty and utility. Those principles, which you then got, like your grammar rules, only by rote, are now, I am fully persuaded, fixed and confirmed by reason. . . . I have, therefore, since you have had the use of reason, never written to you upon those subjects; they speak best for themselves; and I should now just as soon think of warning you gravely not to fall into the dirt or the fire as into dishonour or vice."<sup>1</sup> Nor does he argue that these principles are to be less regarded now by the young man in his purely personal relations. "Pray," he writes, "let no quibbles of lawyers, no refinements of casuists, break into the plain notions of right and wrong which every man's right reason and plain common sense suggest to him. To do as you would be done by is the plain, sure, and undisputed rule of morality and justice. Stick to that; and be convinced that whatever breaks into it, in any degree, however speciously it may be turned, and however puzzling it may be to answer it, is, notwithstanding, false in itself, unjust, and criminal."<sup>2</sup> And again, though in more mundane fashion, he impresses upon the young fellow that he cannot, for his own sake, be too careful to abide by such rules of conduct. "I hope in God," he says, "and I verily believe, that you want no moral virtue. But the possession of all the moral virtues *in actu primo*, as the logicians call it, is not sufficient; you must have them *in actu secundo*, too; nay, that is not sufficient neither; you must have the reputation of them also. Your character in the world must be built upon that solid foundation, or it will soon fall, and upon your own head. You cannot therefore be too careful, too nice, too scrupulous in establishing this character at first, upon

<sup>1</sup> Letter clxviii.<sup>2</sup> Letter cxxxii.



which your whole future depends. Let no conversation, no example, no fashion, no *bon mot*, no silly desire of seeming to be above what most knaves, and many fools, call prejudices, ever tempt you to avow, excuse, extenuate, or laugh at the least breach of morality; but show upon all occasions, and take all occasions to show, a detestation and abhorrence of it.”<sup>1</sup> How, it may be asked, are we to reconcile these precepts with others in which the letters abound, and which have called down upon the writer’s head the censure of nearly every moralist who has perused them? Simply by bearing in mind, first, that theory of the double life to which we have referred; and secondly, the no less apparent fact that Chesterfield shared the ladylike notion that the most inexcusable thing in open vice is its being *low*, i.e. practised in such a manner as to drag a man down to the lower levels of society. The libertinism of the *gentleman* was one thing, a mere concession to the fashion of the day; that of the *roué*, a debasing form of mere animalism, unworthy of a man who respected himself and those around him. “Above all,” he entreats, “may I be convinced that your pleasures, whatever they may be, will be confined within the circle of good company and people of fashion. . . . I will neither pay for nor suffer the unbecoming, disgraceful, and degrading pleasures—they cannot be called pleasures—of low and profligate company. . . . The gallantry of high life, though not strictly justifiable, carries at least no external marks of infamy about it; neither the heart nor the constitution are corrupted by it; and manners possibly are improved.” Very odd morality this; but it was a morality the old man firmly believed in. Libertinism was not to be practised for its own sake—that would be decidedly wrong; but regarded as a means of culture, as a fashionable amusement, as a pleasant way of making men like and women love you, as the pursuit of a *gentleman*, in

<sup>1</sup> Letter cxciij.

fact, it might be discreetly practised ; nay, a young fellow who had to make his way in the world could not very well get on without it, so that the question was really not so much one of immorality as of common prudence. It was the view which prevailed in the early part of the eighteenth century, and we can no more blame one who claimed to be nothing better than "a man of the world" for holding it than we can blame him for not having been born in the nineteenth. Were Chesterfield alive now, he would probably write in a wholly different strain ; would accommodate himself to the tone of our time, would enjoin his son to do the same, and his *Letters* would, in all likelihood, be reproduced in a cheap form by the Religious Tract Society. Abstract moral truth may be eternal ; but practical morality is very much a question of place and dates.

It is not the object of these pages to whitewash Chesterfield. He was not a "good man" in the conventional sense of that term, but one of those who assign to expediency that position which is the right of conscience ; and readers must be left to decide how far, considering the time in which he lived and the special object which he had in view, he was justified in laying down such a code of morals as the *Letters* contain for the guidance of his son. When we come to discuss his precepts as to manners and deportment we find ourselves upon firmer ground, though, even here, the march of time has played havoc with much of his wisdom. Dr. Johnson averred that, "leaving out the immorality, the *Letters* might be made a very pretty book which should be put into the hands of every young gentleman" ; and to a certain extent this is true, though young gentlemen of the present day would be slow, and very justly, to accept his lordship's code of manners. Our youths have outgrown the *petit-maitre*-ism which was the distinguishing characteristic of an elegant young gentleman of Chesterfield's day, and any youth

formed upon that model would now be regarded as a milksop and a prig. Still, the *Letters* abound with invaluable rules for conduct which, though every well-brought-up lad knows them perfectly well, he will be nothing the worse for being reminded of. Few, for instance, will deny the truth and justice of such remarks as: "It is by being well dressed, not finely dressed, that a gentleman should be distinguished. . . . Cautiously avoid talking of either your own or other people's domestic affairs. Yours are nothing to them, but tedious; theirs are nothing to you. The subject is a tender one; and it is odds but you touch somebody or other's sore place; for in this case there is no trusting to specious appearances, which may be, and often are, so contrary to the real situation of things that, with the best intentions in the world, one often blunders disagreeably."<sup>1</sup> "Good-breeding carries along with it a dignity that is respected by the most petulant. Ill-breeding invites and authorizes the familiarity of the most timid." . . . "Whoever is in a hurry shows that the thing he is about is too big for him. Haste and hurry are two very different things." . . . "A man who tells nothing, or who tells all, will equally have nothing told to him." . . . "When a man of sense happens to be in a disagreeable situation in which he is obliged to ask himself more than once—*What shall I do?* he will answer himself *Nothing*. When his reason points out to him no good way, or at least no way less bad than another, he will stop short and wait for light." . . . "Common sense (which is in truth very uncommon) is the best sense I know of; abide by it: it will counsel you best." . . . "The height of abilities is, to have *volto sciolto* and *pensieri stretti*; that is, a frank, open and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent and reserved interior." . . . "In the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief." . . .

<sup>1</sup> Letter cxxxv.

“Company is a republic too jealous of its liberties to suffer a dictator, even for a quarter of an hour.” . . . “Contract a habit of speaking well upon every occasion, and neglect yourself in no one. Eloquence and good-breeding alone, with an exceedingly small degree of parts and knowledge, will carry a man a great way.” . . . “A man of sense takes for his models those persons whom he observes to be at the head of the fashion and good-breeding. He watches how they address themselves to their superiors, how they accost their equals, and how they treat their inferiors, and lets none of those little niceties escape him which are to good-breeding what the last delicate and masterly touches are to a good picture, and of which the vulgar have no notion, but by which good judges distinguish the master. He attends even to their air, dress and motions, and imitates them liberally, and not servilely—he copies, but does not mimic.” . . . “With very small variations, the same things that please women please men; and a man whose manners are softened and polished by women of fashion, and who is formed by them to an habitual attention and complaisance, will please, engage, and convince men much easier and more than he would otherwise.” Are there many fond parents of this most moral age who would hesitate to counsel their sons in pretty much the same way? As for the “Graces” upon which Chesterfield is constantly insisting, they are somewhat out of fashion; but the principle that lies at the bottom of his insistence has been recognized by the social philosophers of all ages and countries: *Τὸ πρέπον*, *decorum*, *bel air*, good-breeding, have, and always will have, their value as principles recognized, however widely their constituent elements may vary from time to time. The *graces* of the eighteenth century may be out of date, but the spirit that suggested them is as fresh as ever. Other high priests of fashion have succeeded Chesterfield, and worship is now conducted at the

shrine with a slightly different ceremonial; but the religion is the same—a little more elevated in tone perhaps, though even of that we are not quite sure. His *volto sciolto é pensieri stretti*; his nice distinction between a pardonable *simulatio* and an unpardonable *dissimulatio*, his code of gentlemanly libertinism, are doctrines which, put as he put them, we shake our heads at; but, if report may be trusted, they have not as yet been wholly extirpated from our social liturgy, just as vestiges of the Mass-book linger in the reformed Book of Common Prayer.<sup>1</sup>

What time Chesterfield could spare from his building and gardening and paternal admonitions he devoted chiefly to his friends. Madame de Monconseil is the recipient of sundry long and entertaining letters, which are, however, chiefly on subjects which possess little interest for English readers. His Irish friend Dr. Madden is not forgotten, nor are the interests of that gentleman's native country. "Though my cares for Ireland are ceased," he writes, "you do me but justice in being convinced that my wishes for the prosperity of that country will cease but with my life. . . . The Irish may be a rich and happy people *bona si sua nōrint*. Free from the heavy load of debts and taxes under which the English groan, as fit for arts, sciences, industry, and labour, as any people in the

<sup>1</sup> In these and some of the following passages more attention has been paid to continuity of subject than of dates. In dealing with so large a correspondence it has been necessary to make selections of the most striking passages, and as the *Letters* abound with iteration there has been no sacrifice of truth in doing so. Chesterfield keeps pounding the same maxims into his son's obtuse head on every available occasion, and the reader can hardly refer to a page of the four octavo volumes edited by Mrs. Stanhope in which he will not find some of these maxims in one shape or another. The same remark will apply to the description of his life in seclusion, which may be said to have lasted nearly a quarter of a century, and during that time to have presented features so closely resembling each other that, even as regards intensity, they are almost identical. His infirmities and sufferings extend over the whole period, though, of course, are more and more accentuated towards its close, and it has been thought advisable, even at the expense of strict accuracy, to forbear inflicting upon the reader a detailed account of their respective aggravations in the order of time.

world, they might, notwithstanding some hard restraints which England, by a mistaken policy, has laid them under, push several branches of trade to great perfection and profit, and not only supply themselves with everything they want, but other nations too with many things.”<sup>1</sup> To his “good friend” Alderman Faulkner, of Dublin, in a cheerful and kindly strain; and to the faithful Dayrolles, at The Hague, in words of wisdom calculated to guide one safely through the thorny paths of diplomacy. Major Irvine is not forgotten, nor the troubles which the energetic apothecary, Charles Lucas, was stirring up at Dublin. To the Bishop of Waterford, Dr. Chevenix, he writes more confidentially than to perhaps any other of his correspondents; but finds time to spare for mere acquaintances, like Madame du Boccage and the Baron de Kremungen, and does not allow the great Voltaire to forget him.

It is impossible to do more here than allude to this correspondence, which will, however, repay perusal, as it shows better than, perhaps, any of the rest the wonderful versatility of the writer and his intimate knowledge of that public life from which he had chosen to withdraw. Considering the state of his health, for he was now a confirmed valetudinarian, the energy which it displays is marvellous. Few men distracted with pain, sickness, and decrepitude, and with fast-failing eyesight into the bargain, would not have shirked the trouble of keeping up such a vigorous and varied correspondence; fewer still would have forgotten their personal troubles in concern for the welfare of their public and private friends. He has a kind, cheerful word, too, for everybody: for the Duke of Newcastle, who had treated him so scurvily, but who is now glad enough to seek his counsel and assistance; for Lady Yarmouth, who had failed him in the hour of need; for Lyttelton, who did not deserve particularly well at his hands; for Pitt, whom he had mistrusted, and with some reason; for

<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 886, 15 September, 1748.

Lord Sandwich, who had ever been a thorn in his side : in fact, he requites good for evil all round. The battle over, hard knocks are forgotten ; and he reaches a friendly hand to those who dealt them. He is always ready to do a good turn for those who ask or need his services, and so far as we know, never desirous of revenging himself upon those who have injured him. For the rest, he lived a quiet, simple life, spending his winters in town, his summers at Blackheath. Books became more and more his solace, and he graduates them to his energies : *folios* in the morning, when his powers are freshest ; *quartos* in the afternoon, when his strength is somewhat impaired by the labour of the day ; and volatile *octavos* at night, when he feels incapable of digesting heavier literature. His exercise, when in the country, is chiefly taken on a sedate cob, for his legs are beginning to fail ; and he potters about with his gardener, looking after the welfare of those vegetables which he regards as his "equals," or fostering the precarious growth of his melons and ananas. His fare is of the simplest, and so far from mourning, he laughs at its simplicity. "An ass and a cow," he writes, "nourish me between them, very plentifully and wholesomely : in the morning the ass is my nurse, at night the cow ; and I have just now bought a milch-goat which is to nurse me at Blackheath." He never grumbles ; but takes his pains and aches as matters of course. "Physical ills," he declares, "are the taxes laid upon this wretched life ; some are taxed higher, and some lower, but all pay something. My philosophy teaches me to reflect how much higher, rather than how much lower, I might have been taxed." There may be a smack of pagan fatalism about the wording of this sentiment, which reads like a fragment of Marcus Aurelius ; but with a little difference of phraseology it might pass muster as Christianity of a very fair type.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The death of the Prince of Wales (20 March, 1751) upset a scheme which Chesterfield had nourished for the advancement of his son. It

appears from an observation of Dr. Maty that there had been some talk of appointing Lord Chesterfield "governor" to the young Prince (afterwards George III), and, from some of his letters, that he was not without hopes of getting Philip Stanhope an appointment in the Prince's household. Whether the illegitimacy which had barred the latter's way to other preferment would have prevented this cause is a moot point; but that his father was sanguine of success appears from a letter (7 April, 1751) written to the young man when Prince George (afterwards George III) became Prince of Wales. "In two years' time, which will be as soon as you are fit for it, I hope to be able to plant you in the soil of a *young court* here; where if you have all the address, the suppleness, and versatility of a good courtier, you will have a great chance of thriving and flourishing. Young favour is easily acquired if the proper means are employed. . . . *Quitte pour ce qui en peut arrivée après.* Do not mention this view of mine for you to any mortal."

*Madame de Monconseil*:—The name of Madame de Monconseil occurs so frequently in Chesterfield's correspondence that, although she is but slightly connected with his active or public life, it seems to require some notice here. In writing to her (on 24 June, 1745), he introduces his son as follows: "J'ai un garçon qui à cette heure a treize ans; je vous avouerai naturellement qu'il n'est pas légitimé, mais sa mère est une personne bien née, et qui a eu des bontés pour moi qui je ne meritois pas." (For a description of the lady, see Ernst's *Life of Chesterfield*, p. 247-8 n.)

Whether the relations between Madame la Marquise de Monconseil and Lord Chesterfield were warmer than those of mere friendship is matter of conjecture; but it may be added that there was nothing in the antecedents of either to forbid an assumption either way. The lady was the daughter of Monsieur de Cursay, who had the honour of being brother to a mistress (Madame de Prie) of the Duke of Bourbon. From her earliest years she had a reputation for beauty, independence, and intrigue. One Angerre is said to have introduced her into questionable life; but soon she emerged from this by becoming the wife of an officer; and, according to Walpole, had the reputation of being "a most intriguing and interested woman and dipped in all kinds of cabals." Englishmen seem to have formed an attraction for her, as, in addition to Lord Chesterfield, she was on terms of intimacy with Lord Clinton and General Churchill, and used to correspond with Sir Robert Walpole, with whose character she professed to be in love. "I was introduced to her," says Horace Walpole, "in 1739, when her mother kept a gaming-house. She was tall, had a very fine skin and eyes, but too long a face. She was much connected with a Prince of Conti and the Marquis de Maillebois; and when I knew her, in 1766, she was a personal enemy of the Duc de Choiseul, and her home was the rendezvous of all his enemies. . . . I have supped there with Marshal Richelieu and Madame la Marechal de Mirepoix, who for a great number of years had never spoken to one another, but at the King's parties, since the Marshal had killed her first husband, the Prince de Lixin. Madame de Mirepoix drew upon herself the anger of the Duc de Choiseul by marrying her nephew the Prince d'Henin to Madame de Monconseil's second daughter." From all this it would seem that Madame de Monconseil was a clever, attractive woman, with a decided turn



for intrigue and a keen regard for her own interests ; that she was of the mode and moved in the most distinguished society, and that she was therefore just the sort of person whose acquaintance Chesterfield would be likely to cultivate. That she was equally taken with him, and for very much the same reason, is also probable ; and that they formed a sincere regard for each other is presumable from the fact of their correspondence being continued to the very close of his life. As to the existence of a more tender feeling on either side, that seems very doubtful, as both were sensible, practical people of mature age, who had their sentiments perfectly under control. There is nothing in his letters to countenance such a notion, for they never venture beyond that high-flown tone of gallantry which he adopted with all his female correspondents. If we assume that each thought the other a useful person to know, and throw in a little of that regard which is customary between friends of long standing, we shall probably not be far from the truth. Romance was certainly no foible of the gentleman, nor is it likely to have been one of so experienced a woman of the world as Madame la Marquise de Monconseil.

X

REFORMS THE CALENDAR :  
RETIRES FROM PUBLIC LIFE

SO far, then, as politics were concerned, Chesterfield, though remaining an interested spectator of the part played by contemporaries who were less hampered by bodily infirmities than himself, had abandoned all active participation in the game. Not that his weight and influence suffered by this abstention. Now that he had ceased to be their rival, the jealous heads of the administration were not slow to avail themselves of the ripe judgment, the forecasting shrewdness, and the resourceful ability which it had previously been their determined aim to keep in the background. As was to be expected, the Duke of Newcastle executed a complete *volte-face*, having suddenly discovered, when well rid of him, that Chesterfield was invaluable. Whenever he got into a difficulty—which was not seldom—he resorted to that sage counsellor for advice ; loaded him with attentions ; pressed his acceptance of honours which had lost their charm, and even extended his kindness to young Philip Stanhope, whom, at a time when the rest of the world looked somewhat coldly upon that victim of circumstances, he distinguished by marks of attention no less useful than good-natured. The old man was touched by this mark of consideration. “ I cannot acknowledge as

I could wish,"<sup>1</sup> he writes to the Duke (11 August, 1752), "the mark of your Grace's favour and protection to Mr. Stanhope"; and he pleads hard for his boy to be appointed Resident at Venice, which prayer the Duke would have been willing enough to grant; but unfortunately poor Philip's bend-sinister stood in the way of these friendly endeavours; and after an unpleasant incident in which the latter was given embarrassing prominence, he had to sneak out of Brussels to hide his mortification.<sup>2</sup> His father, though sadly disappointed, for he had looked upon the Venetian preferment as assured, bore this rebuff with his accustomed philosophy. "As for the boy himself," he writes to Dayrolles, "people in his situation must sometimes expect disagreeable things of that nature; and I have made use of this incident in my letter to him to show him how necessary it is for him to counterbalance this disadvantage by superior merit and knowledge." He determines that the young fellow shall go into Parliament, and is confident that the Duke of Newcastle's support, combined with the fact of his election, will surmount all opposition to him on the score of his birth. Nothing discourages the old man, not even the gradual disappearance of his contemporaries from that life to which he himself was clinging with so frail a hold. Lord Bolingbroke died of a cruel disease; but in deploring his friend's loss, he expresses none of those anticipations regarding his own end which we might have expected. All that seems to disconcert him is the remembrance of the pain which Bolingbroke suffered at the last—"mal que je crains," he assures Madame de Monconseil, "bien plus, pour mes amis et pour moi-même, que le mort."

Most valetudinarians of fifty-seven would consider the life that Chesterfield was now leading quite sufficiently employed; but his habits and tastes were such that he

<sup>1</sup> Ernst, p. 443.

<sup>2</sup> The story of this disappointment is told later on at p. 311-12.

could not so easily become reconciled to what he described as "a vegetable kind of existence." To be cut off from all share in the world's active progress was intolerable; and as people with a genuine desire for work rarely fail to discover some congenial employment, he was fortunate enough to hit upon a task that not only interested himself, but proved of incalculable benefit to the public. This is not the place for entering into a learned disquisition upon the measurement of time; but it may not be thought superfluous to remind unscientific readers that, so late as the second half of the eighteenth century, the English people were behind most European countries in respect to a matter upon which it was natural to suppose that a commercial nation would be more than usually accurate, namely, the correct dating of their letters. All their dates were in fact *misdates*, being eleven days behind the real time. Every schoolboy, of course, knows how the error arose; but as all of us have not the good fortune to be schoolboys, it may not be out of place here to give a brief untechnical account of its origin. The solar year, which is that particular form of year used for dating purposes, is the time that the earth takes to go round the sun, or more accurately, "the period that lapses between two successive passages through the vernal equinox." This period has been variously computed at *about* 365 days 5 hours 48½ minutes; but in the easy-going old times people only counted the 365 days as composing the year, never troubling themselves about the surplus hours, minutes, and seconds. The consequence was that, in the course of centuries, this neglected surplus accumulated to a very respectable number of days, which, of course, represented the difference between the actual date and that by which a careless world was content to date its letters. By the time of Julius Cæsar this error had reached such a magnitude that, struck by the absurdity of having to date a letter, say, the first of January, when it was really the first of June,

he resolved that the matter should be set straight. Accordingly he consulted the most eminent astronomer of his day—one Sosigenes, an Egyptian—as to the best means of reforming the existing calendar. Sosigenes recommended what was, at best, only a makeshift, namely, that one day should be added every four years “by reckoning the sixth day before the calends of March twice; hence the term *bissextile*.” This recommendation was adopted in 44 B.C., and the Julian Calendar accepted by the world in general for the next sixteen centuries. Of course, it contained in itself the seeds of its own destruction. To add a whole day every four years was to compute the solar year at 365 days 6 hours, which, as we have seen, is some eleven minutes too much, and these odd minutes kept piling up until, by the middle of the sixteenth century, they amounted to about ten days; so that every dated letter began with a gross misstatement. This naturally shocked the then head of the Church, Pope Gregory the Great, who in 1582 reformed the obnoxious Calendar by publishing an edict that in future: Every year divisible by four was to be accounted a bissextile, or *leap* year, containing 366 days, all other years (except certain “secular” years) to consist only of 365 days; every “secular” year (that is, the first year of a century) divisible by 400 to be also a bissextile, or leap year, containing 366 days, but secular years not so divisible to contain only 365 days. In the new arrangement there is also an error of excess; but so trifling (amounting to only one day in 3866 years) that it need not concern us much. The accumulated error of ten days was disposed of by enacting that the fifth day of October should be reckoned the fifteenth of the same month; and it was likewise enacted that every year should in future begin on 1 January. To the Calendar thus reformed was given the name of *New Style*, as distinguished from the Julian, or *Old Style*, and it became the practice to prefix to dates when given the letters O.S. and N.S.

respectively, as showing whether a given date had been computed according to the old or the new method. It may be thought that a reform so obviously useful would have been welcomed by the whole civilized world, but even in a matter of this kind bigotry prevailed over common sense. Whilst all the Catholic powers and most of the Protestant ones adopted the New Calendar, three nations—Sweden, Russia, and, we are sorry to add, England—adhered to the Old Style for apparently no better reason than that suggested by Walpole, “as if it were matter of heresy to receive a Calendar amended by a Pope.” This divergence of practice gave rise to much confusion, especially with regard to diplomatic correspondence; and during his various employments abroad, Chesterfield had reason to complain of the inconvenience and inaccuracies resulting from confusion of dates, which both complicated and interfered with the conduct of business. At home, too, a quite unnecessary complication was allowed to prevail, for the reason that people had become so well accustomed to it as not to feel its inconvenience, though to us, their descendants, the practice of “double dating” is an unmitigated nuisance. Those who have had to consult records dating earlier than the first half of the eighteenth century are familiar with the circumstance that where the date of a year is given in figures the last cipher often presents itself in the guise of a fraction—thus 173 $\frac{4}{5}$ ; and that this only occurs where the specific date lies between 1 January and 25 March. The reason is this. It was then the privilege of the English people to have two perfectly distinct years—“the Historical year,” which began on 1 January, and the Civil, Ecclesiastical, and Legal year, which began on 25 March; hence a letter, dated 14 February, 173 $\frac{4}{5}$ , gave the recipient to understand that it was written, as he or she chose to take it, civilly, legally, and ecclesiastically in 1734, but historically in 1735—the denominator of the fraction always signifying the historical year. The necessity for this distinction is

not very obvious, yet people of precise habits were most careful to observe it; it may have had its uses as an index to character; but whatever the reason, our forefathers clung to it for nearly two centuries after its abandonment by those who adopted the New Style. To Chesterfield, however, it was no fetish, but an inconvenient absurdity; and he resolved that some of the leisure which hung so heavily on his hands might be devoted usefully to its abolition. The task which he set himself was by no means a light one. It necessitated an amount of preparation from which any less energetic man of his years and health might well have shrunk; and further, involved certain risks which, had he been still in office, not even his resolution might have cared to encounter. To interfere with any long-established usage in this most conservative of countries is no light venture; and when he broached his intention to the Duke of Newcastle, that horrified minister besought him to abandon it. "He was alarmed at so bold an undertaking," says the adventurous reformer, "and conjured me not to stir matters that had long been quiet; adding that he did not love new-fangled things." Chesterfield was not, however, to be turned from his purpose by these entreaties, more especially as the head of the Ministry, Mr. Henry Pelham, and the Lord Chancellor viewed it favourably. "It was not, in my opinion," he wrote to his son (18 March, 1751), "very honourable for England to remain in a gross and avowed error, the inconvenience of which was likewise felt by all those who had foreign correspondences, whether political or mercantile. I determined therefore to attempt the reformation; I consulted the best lawyers and the most skilful astronomers, and we cooked up a Bill for that purpose." He did more; for he prepared the public mind for the change by contributing essays to various periodicals, in which the subject was handled with his accustomed wit and good sense. The Bill was drawn and the necessary tables prepared by a barrister named Davall; and before

being introduced was carefully examined and approved by the President of the Royal Society and the Astronomer Royal, whilst to Lord Macclesfield, a *savant* of the highest eminence who played the part of its tutelary genius, was entrusted the care of its fortunes in the House of Lords. It was introduced on 25 February, 1721; and at the second reading, which took place on the 18th of the following month, Chesterfield made the great speech which cannot be described better than in his own words: "It was absolutely necessary," he writes,<sup>1</sup> "to make the House of Lords think that I knew something of the matter, and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them as astronomy, and they would have understood me just as well; so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them. I gave them, therefore, only an historical account of calendars, from the Egyptian down to the Gregorian, amusing them now and then with little episodes; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the harmony and roundness of my periods, to my elocution, to my action. This succeeded, and [he adds for the benefit of his son] *ever will succeed*; they thought I informed because I pleased them; and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them—whereas, God knows, I had not even attempted it. Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the Bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterwards with intimate knowledge and all the clearness that so intricate a matter would admit of; but as his words, his periods, and his utterance were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me." In a subsequent letter to his son<sup>2</sup> he repeats the same assurance

<sup>1</sup> To his son, 18 March, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> 7 April, 1751.



"I mention this again," he says, "to show you the importance of well-chosen words, harmonious periods, and good delivery; for, between you and me, Lord Macclesfield's speech was in truth worth a thousand of mine." As the speakers were not reported we have no opportunity of comparing them; but it is very likely that Chesterfield underrated the merits of his own, as it was his habit to make light both of his motives and his efforts. Thus he assures Madame de Monconseil that he only thought of introducing the New Style into England because she used it in dating her letters: "*C'était pour établir, par Acte de Parlement, votre style dans ce pays ici . . . comme un bon Protestant je ne voulois avoir rien à faire avec un Pape, mais c'était votre style . . . que je voulois adopter*"; whilst he tells his son, "I was obliged to talk some astronomical jargon of which I did not understand one word, but got it by heart and spoke it by rote from a master." Be that as it may, his oratory was completely triumphant; and ere he had resumed his seat the success of the Bill was assured. Much, however, remained to be done before it became law. The populace regarded its innovation with their accustomed suspicion,<sup>1</sup> whilst many, even among the upper classes of society, were strongly opposed to what appeared to be its inevitable consequences. Landholders, tenants, and merchants were apprehensive of difficulties in regard to rents, leases, bills of exchange, and debts dependent on periods fixed by the Old Style. But it was too late for such objections to prevail; most of them were obviated in the course of its passage through Parliament, and the remainder were left to adjust themselves by the growth of habitude. After sundry amendments by the House of Commons, where it was read a third time on 17 May, the Bill was returned to the Lords and received the royal assent on 22 May, 1751; the only provision of

<sup>1</sup> They clamoured, for instance, against the profanation of changing the saints' days in the calendar, and altering the dates of the movable feasts.

the new Act which need be noticed here being that the year should henceforth begin for all purposes on 1 January, and that the eleven intermediate days between 2 and 14 September, 1752, should in the latter year be suppressed, so that the day succeeding the 2nd should be reckoned the 14th of that month. All sensible people rejoiced in a change of which we are now reaping the benefit; but that class of which the world mostly consists long resisted it. "Give us back the eleven days we have been robbed of!" was the cry with which Lord Macclesfield's son was greeted at the hustings in 1754; and when poor Doctor Bradley, the Astronomer Royal, who had assisted in preparing the Bill, died most painfully in 1762, the common people attributed his sufferings to the share which he had taken in the preparation of the obnoxious measure; though, strangely enough, the arch-contriver of the whole business does not seem to have suffered in popularity. In some things Chesterfield had wonderful luck.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus fairly earned the gratitude of posterity, his lordship resumed the tranquil retirement which he had temporarily abandoned. The world which he had known was gradually slipping from his grasp. Old friends were dropping off one by one. Frederick, Prince of Wales, by whom he was once well beloved, but who, as he said, was "more beloved for his affability and good nature than esteemed for his steadiness and good conduct," had added by his death to the national difficulties, of which his life had not been sparing; as the prospect of a lengthened minority—owing to the tender years of his son, afterwards George III, and the great age of the King—was a problem not very encouraging; and the hopes which Chesterfield

<sup>1</sup> It is, however, remarkable that the *Reform of the Calendar*, one of the most useful reforms ever effected, is now seldom associated with his name, few attributing even a share in that measure to the person to whom it is mainly owing.

had entertained that young Philip Stanhope would be taken into the household of the new Prince of Wales ended, as we see, in disappointment. Bolingbroke, a far dearer friend, had made a most melancholy ending. Dayrolles, the agreeable and subservient, was now far removed—no less by his having been appointed Minister at Brussels than by marriage; and Philip Stanhope was vainly endeavouring to acquire “the Graces” at Paris. Even with his books, his correspondence, and his gardening, the lonely Earl must have found time hang heavily upon his hands. But he makes no sign of discontent; his letters are as cheery as ever. He visits Vauxhall and Ranelagh, though he owns they no longer please him as they once did;<sup>1</sup> he enjoys “les petits amusements” of country life at Blackheath, “c’est à dire m’y promener, chipoter beaucoup dans mon petit jardin, et y soigner mes ananas et mes melons.”<sup>2</sup> Sometimes the charming Lady Hervey brings him news of the outer world, which is doubly welcome from her sweet lips; in fact, as he cheerfully declares, the time glides along “pretty comfortably” (*assez doucement*), which, he adds, is all that he now asks, as he no longer pretends to enjoy it—this last being the only note of sadness that escapes him. Yet, what with gout, growing deafness, and threatened failure of sight, decrease of bodily strength, an ascetic regimen, an ailing wife, and a sadly disappointing son, he had surely worries enough. Perhaps it was these that drove him to that refuge of the unfortunate—literature. Though most of his compositions have disappeared, his biographer assures us that it was chiefly his pen which agreeably and usefully employed his vacant hours, and that he amused himself with the composition of moral and literary essays. “These he sent to the editor of a new periodical paper entitled *The World*. But the first essay he sent had nearly dis-

<sup>1</sup> To Madame du Boccage, 20 May, 1751.

<sup>2</sup> To Madame de Monconseil, 23 May, 1751.

gusted him of writing any more; for being somewhat long, it was neglected, and might perhaps never have been printed, if Lord Lyttelton, coming accidentally into the publisher's shop, and being shown this paper, had not instantly recognized the masterly hand of his former associate and friend, and desired that it might immediately be put to the press."<sup>1</sup> The reception it met with encouraged him to go on; and he continued to furnish occasional papers from that year to 1756, when this publication ceased. Such of these essays as have been preserved derived most of their interest from the circumstances of the time at which they were written; and in point of literary workmanship they perhaps fall short of his earlier contributions to the Press. But they do not merit the sweeping condemnation which a noted critic of our own time has awarded them, being quite up to the average level of contemporary ephemeral literature. What is more, they at once achieved popularity. Walpole tells us how they were read with avidity by the ladies of his acquaintance, amongst whom there used to be quite a flutter of disappointment if *The World* happened to appear without containing an essay from the well-known hand. And if we take into consideration the age and infirmities of the writer, also the fact of his not being a professional penman trained in literary methods, their approach to literary excellence is no less surprising than the freshness, vigour, humour, and wit with which they abound. Though no more to be compared with Addison and Steele than the *World* was to be compared with the *Spectator*, yet among the rank and file of Georgian *littérateurs* he holds his own remarkably well.

Albeit a recluse by preference, he did not at this time neglect any of the social duties devolving upon him in

<sup>1</sup> This somewhat inaccurate account is from the pen of Mr. Justamond, Dr. Maty's son-in-law, who, on the death of Dr. Maty, completed and published the biography. See Maty, vol. II, p. 166 n.

virtue of his rank. He attended Court on great occasions, and hospitably entertained the world of fashion. Then we find him assisting at a chapter of the Garter, and also having what Walpole calls "an immense assembly" at Chesterfield House in the winter of 1754. He rides in Hyde Park that spring like other cavaliers, and is thrown from his horse—no slight thing to happen to an elderly gentleman in his condition. Were it not for his deafness, in fact, he would get along very well, but it gradually incapacitates him for society; yet, as he cheerfully alleges, he is "neither a dejected nor a sour deaf man." Writing from Bath to his old friend Chevenix, he says: "These waters have done my hearing some good, but not enough to fit me for social life. I stay here a fortnight longer in hopes of more benefit, which my physician promises me strongly; as I do not expect it, if I receive it, it will be the more welcome. If not, I have both philosophy and religion enough to submit to my fate without either melancholy or murmur; for although I can by no means account why there is moral or physical evil in the world, yet conscious of the narrow bounds of human understanding, and convinced of the wisdom and justice of the Eternal Divine Being who placed them here, I am persuaded that it is fit and right that they should be here." What Christian philosopher has ever displayed a finer resignation? Then came a sharper trial than even bad health could inflict. That son upon whose future success he had staked so much was, through no fault of his own but for his father's sin, rather ignominiously expelled from the Court of Brussels. Chesterfield had hoped that the stain on his child's birth had by this time been forgotten or at least ignored. King George had received young Stanhope kindly enough when presented to him; so had the Kings of France, of Sicily, of Poland. Everything was going on so pleasantly for the poor boy, when the Marquis de Botta, a fussy Italian who represented the

House of Austria at Brussels, chose to remonstrate violently against the indiscretion of Mr. Dayrolles in presenting Philip to Prince Charles of Lorraine. Dayrolles tried to fight the question; but it was of no use, and the only way of preventing a scandal was to hustle the lad forthwith out of Brussels—which, considering what different treatment had frequently been meted out to other persons labouring under a similar disability, was very hard luck indeed. Good-natured people tried to hush the matter up, and Chesterfield himself affected to make very light of it; but it proved the turning-point in his son's fortunes. From that time his rise on the diplomatic ladder was checked. King George, who no doubt had heard the story, became suddenly scrupulous, and refused point-blank to give the youth the Residency at Venice, on the ground of his birth; and in acknowledging the Duke of Newcastle's efforts to serve him on the occasion, Lord Chesterfield sorrowfully owns that he is almost left without hope. "Mr. Stanhope's situation is," he declares with a sigh, "more unfortunate than ever I apprehended it to be, the motive for his exclusion being a perpetual one which no time can remove." None the less does the indomitable old man redouble his efforts to push his "boy" on despite of everything. "I have philosophy enough," he assures Dayrolles, "never unavailingly to regret what cannot be retrieved. I look forwards, and in that view I shall bring your little friend into the next Parliament; and the Parliamentary cloak, more extensive, if possible, than that of charity, will cover that involuntary sin." How stoutly he fought the adverse battle, and how near he came to winning it, will appear later on.

Contrary to the usual tendency of old men in the direction of strict conservatism, the older he became, the more his political views broadened. In the session of 1752 an Act had been passed which enabled all Jews to prefer bills of naturalization in parliament, without receiving the

sacrament, as ordained by 7 Jac. I, and to this measure Lord Chesterfield always gave his hearty approval in spite of the strong popular prejudice which, foreseeing in it the germ of the destruction of Christianity in England, clamoured for its repeal. To this prejudice the nervous Duke of Newcastle foolishly yielded; and after having been law for only a few months, the Act was repealed by 27 Geo. II, c. i, so that the Jews were once more reduced to the position of being excluded from Parliament by reason of their inability to take the oath of abjuration, and from civic office, because they could not partake of the sacraments of the Established Church. Chesterfield denounced and ridiculed the groundless and senseless clamours against "the Jew Bill" with all his might. He blamed the Duke of Newcastle for his weakness in yielding to them; declaring "this noise against the Jew Bill proceeds from a narrow spirit of intoleration in religious and inhospitality in civil matters; both which all wise governments should oppose." How far he was in advance of his time on this point is shown by the slow progress of that emancipation of the Jews from the invidious disabilities which English common sense and justice at length secured. Even the relief proffered them by repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts in the reign of George IV was nugatory, since though a "declaration was substituted by 9 Geo. IV, c. xvii, for the former test, yet such declaration was, by what can at best be only described as a curious oversight, required to be made in the same form as the oath of abjuration, that is "on the true faith of a Christian"; and it was not until the late Queen Victoria had occupied the throne for nearly a quarter of a century that the concession so warmly advocated by Chesterfield was granted. Nor was it only in respect of progressive toleration that his views outstripped those of his contemporaries. Combined with this breadth of statesmanship was the faculty of prescience sometimes found in those who observe narrowly and

ponder deeply on the course of events narrated in history or occurring in experience. Watching anxiously what was taking place in France at this time, he recommends his son to do the same. "Wherever you are," he says, "inform yourself minutely of, and attend particularly to, the affairs of France; they grow serious and in my opinion will grow more and more so every day. . . . The French nation reasons freely, which they never did before, upon matters of religion and government," and then he indulges in that remarkable forecast which ere long was to be amply fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> "In short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in history previous to great changes and revolutions in Government, now exist and daily increase in France." He has no word of condemnation for the terrible retribution which he foresees. Justice had, in his opinion, been outraged by the domination which what are known as the privileged orders had arrogated to themselves. He ridicules the contempt which many historians show for humanity in general, "as if the whole human species consisted but of about one hundred and fifty people called and distinguished (commonly very deservedly too) by the titles of Emperors, Kings, Popes, Generals and Ministers." His physical sight growing dim, his mental vision penetrated more and more thoroughly the shams around him; and even while exhorting his son to conform to the social organization in which his lines were cast, he keeps warning him that the system is an artificial one which might any day collapse were down-trodden humanity to become conscious of its rights. It is strange to read these naive confessions of the astute aristocrat who makes no pretence of belief in, or reverence for, the system by which he is, however, quite content to profit. He feels amused surprise that mankind should tolerate what he more than hints to be a fraudulent imposition; but he is no iconoclast, and even incites his son to devout worship of those very

<sup>1</sup> See Bradshaw, vol. II, p. 593; vol. III, p. 1066.



idols upon whose senselessness he is continually expatiating. The part which he thus plays does not command our respect; it is not that which a high-minded man would be content to fill—this bowing down in the house of Rimmon whilst holding Rimmon to be a false god; but he might have pleaded the same excuse for his conformity as was accepted from Naaman. And it must be remembered to his credit that, if he joined in the worship of that which he despised, he endeavoured to rid that worship of its most objectionable features, of its human sacrifices, its priestly intolerance, its exactions, its compulsions of conscience; that he fearlessly denounced sanguinary wars waged to justify royal whims; that he withstood bigoted persecution on so-called religious grounds; that he strove with all his might and main to shield the taxpayer from unnecessary imposts, and that he battled unceasingly in the cause of liberalism. Though he had no mind to be a martyr, or to wield a pick among those who were trying to undermine the foundations of the house in which he lived, he was willing and anxious that other people's houses should be rendered abodes of comfort and security, and that in all political essentials Jack should be as well off as his master.

So keen was still his interest in public questions that it was fancied by those in power that he had not altogether relinquished the taste for active employment. About the beginning of 1754 a rumour, sufficiently spread to reach his son, then on the Continent, arose to the effect that he was to be reappointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and from his way of disclaiming it there is some ground for presuming that the Government had approached him with tentative overtures on the subject. "You will have no opportunity," he writes to his son, "of subscribing yourself, my Excellency's etc., . . . I know myself (no common piece of knowledge, let me tell you), I know what I can, what I cannot, and consequently what I ought to do. I ought not, and therefore will not, return to business when I am

much less fit for it than I was when I quitted it. Still less will I go to Ireland, where from my deafness and infirmities, I must necessarily make a different figure from that which I once made there. My pride would be too much mortified by that difference.”<sup>1</sup> But from a letter written to his friend Dayrolles about the same time,<sup>2</sup> it is evident that disinclination for work had nothing to do with his rejection of such offers. “It is true,” he says, “I have nothing else to do but to write. . . . I used to snatch up the pen with momentary raptures, because by choice; but now I am married to it. . . . I often scribble, but at the same time protest to you that I almost as often burn. . . . What will finally come of all this I do not know; nothing I am sure that shall appear while I am alive, except by chance, save short trifling essays, like the *Spectator*, upon some new folly or absurdity that may happen to strike me, as I have now and then helped Mr. Fitz-Adem in his weekly paper called the *World*.”<sup>3</sup> To Chesterfield idleness was an impossibility: shut out by his infirmities from the broad stream of action, his energies were at once directed into other channels, too late indeed for any successful enterprise, but still by no means fruitlessly. His literary efforts achieved quite an average popularity, and his reputation as a man of letters grew into something very like fame. The Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres at Paris elected him one of its foreign correspondents, and the *litterati* of his own country admitted him to their fellowship with a unanimity which was not based exclusively on respect for his title.

The dissolution of Parliament which followed the death

<sup>1</sup> From a Letter (of 26 February, 1754).

<sup>2</sup> See Bradshaw, vol. III, pp. 1082-4.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Chesterfield might well be styled the “Atlas” of the *World* from 1753-6, as his contributions formed the main attraction of that journal. Nos. 18, 24, 25, 29, 49, 90, 91, 92, 98, 100, 101, 105, 111, 112, 113, 114, 120, 146, 148, 151, 189, 196, 197, are almost entirely from his hand, and the first volume was effusively dedicated to him.

of Mr. Pelham afforded Lord Chesterfield the opportunity of carrying out one of his darling ambitions. At the new election young Philip Stanhope was, chiefly through the Duke of Newcastle's good offices, chosen to represent the borough of Liskeard. Now had come the time when the fruition of his hopes, the result of long years of anxious training, of ceaseless exhortation, seemed well within the grasp of that indefatigable parent. A young man of Philip's uncommon erudition, to whose practical knowledge of affairs and worldly experience was added persistent training in the art of public speaking by the most finished orator of his day, was surely certain to make his mark in Parliament; and that once accomplished, all those hindrances to success arising from "his birth's invidious bar" would melt away like snow before the sun. Alas! nature proved too strong for art. In spite of his book knowledge, Philip was a dullard, and chicken-hearted to boot. He broke down badly in his first speech made in the House; not an unprecedented occurrence, to be sure, and which, had he been made of a different mould, need not have mattered. But he lacked the courage that takes a man to the front in spite of reverses. In vain his father used every conceivable argument to console him for the temporary failure, and encouraged him to make another attempt. "I am not surprised nor indeed concerned at your accident," writes this indulgent parent, "for I remember the dreadful feeling of that situation in myself; and as it must require a most uncommon share of impudence to be unconcerned upon such an occasion, I am not sure that I am not *rather glad* you stopped." Was ever a disappointed sire more magnanimous over the failure of his hopes?

To most young men such magnanimity would have acted as a spur inciting them to make at least one more desperate effort to realize the hopes which had been formed of them. Not so with the craven-hearted Philip. Neither love nor gratitude nor ambition nor common

manliness stirred the pulses of his ignoble heart. He could not be prevailed upon to open his lips again in the House, and speedily sank into an oblivion which he well deserved. Not even then did the most tolerant of parents relax his efforts to further his son's interests. Having perforce abandoned all hope of a parliamentary career for his unworthy offspring, he fell back upon the only form of public life for which Philip had evinced the slightest aptitude, and by every means at his disposal endeavoured to procure him opportunities of diplomatic employment. In these efforts he was warmly seconded by the Duke of Newcastle, who prevailed upon the King not only to sanction the appointment of young Stanhope as Minister at Hamburg, but to do so in an unwontedly gracious manner. But flattering as the concession was, it did not altogether heal the wound which Chesterfield's high-wrought hopes had sustained. There is a note of bitterness in his letter of condolence to his friend Dayrolles, who, it appears, wanted the appointment for himself. "It is an obscure, indifferent thing," writes the Earl,<sup>1</sup> "fit for those who propose to stagnate quietly for the rest of their lives. Perhaps that may be the case of the boy"; though in a letter written a month or two afterwards he consoles himself with the reflection, "I have placed my boy in a situation to push himself forward when I am gone."<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, as long as he lived, he never relaxed his efforts. We find him soliciting the Duke of Newcastle's good offices in the spring of 1759 thus: "I am told that some subaltern minister is to be sent to some subaltern courts to replace the late Mr. Burrish at Munich, Mannheim, Ratisbonne, etc. If that be so, would it be impossible, by your grace's protection, to get Mr. Stanhope shoved from the rank of Ensign at Hamburg to that of Second Lieutenant among the Electors of the Rhine." The

<sup>1</sup> To Dayrolles, 5 October, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> To the Bishop of Waterford, 21 November, 1756.

Duke did not forget the request, though it was a considerable time before he found himself in a position to accede to it by a kind of subterfuge—that is by sending Philip, in 1763, on a special mission as Envoy to the Diet at Ratisbon; and in the meantime a General Election having taken place, the discredited member for Liskeard was, by unscrupulously dexterous management, returned as member for St. Germans (1761). Scarcely had he arrived in England to take his seat, when he was appointed Envoy to Dresden, which proved the climax of his inert career. In every step of this upward progress he had been impelled by the indefatigable exertion of paternal love—a love that no disappointment, no shortcomings on his part, availed to lessen. How basely he repaid that unswerving affection; how he not only frustrated the hopes, but betrayed the confidence of that most indulgent father by deceit that was not only inexcusable but unnecessary, were only known when his unworthy life came to a close. For the present he need detain us no longer.

Meanwhile old age and its troubles had been pressing rather heavily upon the indomitable Earl. He describes, with an indecision which will commend itself to most lay minds, his inability to determine whether the particular ailment that tortured him was “goutish-rheumatism or a rheumatic gout.” The doctors, or as he called them, “the learned,” insisted that a visit to Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa would restore his health, and perhaps relieve his deafness. He obeyed them with much reluctance, choosing Spa as the lesser of two evils; but though he remained there nearly three months with some benefit to his general health, his deafness proved more obdurate, and he returned to England as bad in that respect as when he left it. The following autumn was spent in his loved retreat at Blackheath. “This I find is my proper place,” he writes to Dayrolles, “and I know it, which people seldom do. I converse with my equals, my vegetables. . . . I wish I

could send you some of my pine-apples, which are large and excellent; but without magic that cannot be done, and I have no magic." Then he slightly contradicts himself by uttering a sentiment worthy alike of Pagan or Christian philosophers. "Contentment is my only magic; and, thank God, I have found out that art, which is by no means a black one." But disorders in his head, of which giddiness and increased deafness were the most troublesome, drove him to London and thence to Bath, where he likens himself to "an old decayed vessel, of long wear-and-tear, brought into the wet-dock to be careened and patched up, not for any long voyage, but only to serve as a coaster for some little time longer." Still, while he can keep afloat, he will continue to take his share of human commerce. He writes for the *World* on subjects of social interest with a gaiety not at all indicative of a valetudinarian, and in Nos. 32 and 33 of that paper draws public attention to the fact that "Mr. Johnson's English Dictionary, with a grammar and history of our language prefixed, will be published this winter, in two large volumes in folio." Nothing can be kinder than the manner of this introduction. "I think," he writes, "the public in general, and the republic of letters in particular, greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson for having undertaken and executed so great and desirable a work. Perfection is not to be expected from man; but if we are to judge by the various works of Mr. Johnson already published, we have good reason to believe that he will bring this as near to perfection as any one man could do. The plan of it, which he published some years ago, seems to me to be a proof of it. Nothing can be more rationally imagined, or more accurately and elegantly expressed. I therefore recommend the previous perusal of it to all those who intend to buy the dictionary, and who, I suppose, are all those who can afford it." He then goes on to urge in a humorous vein that as "our language is at present in a

state of anarchy," good order and authority are necessary, for which purpose Mr. Johnson should be appointed "dictator." "And I hereby declare," he adds, "that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson during the term of his dictatorship." The humour was kindly and genial enough, though Johnson, as we now know, did not see the fun of it. That somewhat thin-skinned philosopher having got hold of a grievance was not the man to part with it lightly, as the Earl found to his cost. His kindly recommendation was flung back in his teeth by that celebrated letter with which we are all familiar. Yet, when one comes to think of it, the reality of the writer's grievance is not easy to discover. We must bear in mind that when Johnson first submitted his plan for the dictionary to Chesterfield, in November, 1747, he was a comparatively unknown man. With the exception of his poem *London* and the *Life of Savage*, he had written nothing of importance. Boswell did not make his acquaintance till sixteen years later, when he was a very different person indeed; and his notion of the slight offered to Johnson by the former Secretary of State must be gauged by Johnson's position as he knew it, not by that which his idol actually held so many years before. No man of his day had a greater reverence for literature and its professors than Chesterfield. It may be remembered how in one of the letters to his son he says: "For my own part, I used to think myself in company as much above me when I was with Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope as if I had been with all the princes in Europe." If this had been uttered in a set speech, perhaps little importance might attach to it; but occurring where it does, it must be taken as an expression of genuine feeling: and was the man who wrote it likely to treat an author of deserved reputation with disrespect? As Secretary of State, Chesterfield must have had a

superabundance of callers, between whose merits it was not easy for him to discriminate; and they must necessarily, without possessing some special recommendation or introduction, have had to wait their turn. Colley Cibber happened to be one of these on the occasion of Johnson's visit; and his position at the time was such that any public man would have been likely to show him the same kind of attention that would probably be accorded to such a man as the late Sir Henry Irving, in our own time. Johnson, to be sure, had, or professed to have, a profound contempt for men of that calling. It was Cibber's luck to get his audience with Chesterfield first; and Johnson, who must have been well accustomed to be kept waiting whilst publishers were interviewing authors better known than himself, was overcome with resentment on discovering that he had been left cooling his heels in the ante-room whilst the Secretary was engaged with "a mere play-actor." Boiling with indignation, he went home straightway, nor did he ever seek another audience of the "patron" who had unwittingly offended him. But after his manner, he continued to nurse his fancied grievance, and seven years subsequently, when the unconscious subject of his wrath tried to do him a service by taking the earliest opportunity of recommending his dictionary to the public, he wrote that celebrated letter which has gained him so much undeserved sympathy and blackened the fame of his would-be benefactor. As a composition, that letter deserves all the praise that has been lavished upon it; but as a truthful statement of what occurred, its merits are less conspicuous. He was never "repulsed" from Chesterfield's door; and the flourish about not conferring obligations where "no benefit" had been received was, to say the least of it, disingenuous, as he afterwards confessed to Mr. Langton that he had actually received ten pounds from Lord Chesterfield, though he declared "that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could



not properly find place in a letter of the kind." Considering that ten pounds was all he got for his *London*, the work upon which such reputation as he possessed at the date of his seeking that memorable interview was founded, it can hardly have appeared to him so insignificant a sum as he represents—indeed, we know on his own authority that he viewed it in a very different light;<sup>1</sup> at any rate, having accepted it, his lofty disavowal of obligation to the donor is somewhat out of place. Coupling this with the fact that when Johnson inscribed the plan of his dictionary to Chesterfield, the latter had granted him an interview at once, at which the Earl made certain suggestions for its improvement which were afterwards adopted, it is not easy for us to see the justice of the reproach that he had not received "one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour" from the patron whom he had chosen. Noble as was his nature, there were times at which Johnson showed himself unjust, or even disingenuous; and his treatment of Lord Chesterfield affords an instance of this failing.

Despite his infirmities—and they were, about this time, so great that even the short journey to Bath was almost more than his strength could bear—Chesterfield did not relax his attention to public affairs. He found time to examine and suggest alterations in a new Bill, introduced by Lord Limerick, for changing the form of the oath of allegiance, which had hitherto proved a stumbling-block to conscientious Papists. During his Viceroyalty he had contemplated such a change, but had found the intolerance of the Irish House of Commons too strong for him. "That assembly," he writes to Doctor Chevenix, "is more *peuple* than any I ever knew in my life. They are still blinded by all the prejudices of sect, animosity, and fury, and no Bill in which Papists are mentioned can go through that House in a proper form." However, he lived to see a

<sup>1</sup> See note (1) to vol. II, p. 8, of Croker's *Boswell*.

reform which he had been unable to accomplish become law ; the coherence of sectarian intolerance yielded to the wedge of common sense which he had been the first to introduce, and the Irish Papist was henceforth able to swear allegiance to his sovereign without imperilling his conscience or his life. Nor did he forget the claims of friendship, however remote. Montesquieu, the author of the *Esprit des Lois*, having died on 10 February, 1755, a notice of that event, accompanied with a short laudatory character of the deceased, appeared in the *London Evening Post*, which, though unsigned by Chesterfield, was known to be from his pen. That his sense of public duty could rise above old animosities was shown by his action in the House of Lords on the motion brought forward by Lord Poulett for an address to the King, praying him not to visit his Electoral dominions. The motion seems to have been dictated by personal pique resulting from the mover having been disappointed in a matter of preferment ; and Chesterfield, who had often suffered in the same way at his sovereign's hands, might have been expected to act differently. But seeing the bad effects which were sure to follow from such a question being publicly debated, he at once moved the adjournment of the House, which motion being carried *nem. con.*, put a stop to the whole affair. In a letter to his friend Dayrolles he explains the motives by which he was actuated on this occasion. "It was an indecent, ungracious, and malignant question which I had no mind should either be put or debated, well knowing the absurd and improper things that would be said both for and against it, and therefore I moved the House to adjourn. . . . It is supposed that I did it to make my court, and people are impatient to see what great employment I am to have ; for that I am to have one they do not in the least doubt, not having any notion that any man can take any step without some view of dirty interest. I do not undeceive them. I have nothing to fear, I have

nothing to ask ; there is nothing that I can or will have. . . . What good I can do as a man and a citizen, it is my duty, and shall be my endeavour, to do ; but public life and I, we are parted for ever.”<sup>1</sup> Nor did he omit the consideration of those interests which to an invalid at his time of life are of far higher importance. In acknowledging a letter from the Bishop of Waterford, wherein that prelate appears to have used an old friend’s privilege as a Christian divine should, he gives some insight into the nature of his sentiments regarding matters upon which he never has been given the credit of thinking seriously. “As to the letter which you feared might have displeased me,” he writes,<sup>2</sup> “I protest, my dear lord, I looked upon it as the tenderest mark of your friendship ; I had given occasion to it, and I expected it both from your affection and character. Those reflections are not improper, though too often unwelcome, and consequently useless in youth ; but I am now come to a time of life both to make and receive them with satisfaction, and therefore I hope with utility. One cannot think of one’s own existence without thinking of the Eternal Author of it ; and we cannot consider his physical or moral attributes without some fear, though in my mind, still more hope. It is true we can have no adequate notions of the attributes of a Being so infinitely superior to us ; but according to the best notions which we are capable of forming of His justice and mercy, the latter, which is the comfortable scale, seems necessarily to preponderate.” Whether the mental attitude revealed by this quotation be quite orthodox or not, is a point which need not be discussed here ; what seems absolutely certain is that the man who wrote these words cannot justly be accused of scepticism or indifference as regards the foundation of religious belief.

What is perhaps no less remarkable in the case of a

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 2 May, 1755.

<sup>2</sup> Letter 332, Bradshaw, p. 1126, *b*.

retired valetudinarian, he was not forgotten even by that portion of the active world which had no selfish interest to serve by remembering him. L'Academie des Inscriptions, or as he describes it in a letter to the Bishop of Waterford, *L'Academie des Belles Lettres*, at Paris, elected him, as we have already mentioned, in August, 1755, a member of their body. In his letter of thanks for the distinction he betrays a modesty which does not seem feigned. "L'association que m'accorde une des plus illustres Academies de l'Europe m'etonne et me confond," he declares. "Quels furent les motifs de votre choix? Je les cherche, et les trouve aussi peu que des expressions proportionnés à ma reconnaissance."<sup>1</sup> Indeed the letter is, upon the whole, a model of graceful deprecation, though written, as he confesses, *invitâ Minervâ*, as he had been "long disused to compliments and declamations." Any elation which he may have derived from the incident was not, however, destined to be long unclouded, for in the following November Philip Stanhope made that wretched debut in the House of Commons which wrecked all his father's hopes without diminishing his parental kindness. Soon after came his virtual and final withdrawal from parliamentary life; the last occasion on which he spoke at any length in the House of Lords being 10 December in the same year. Lord Temple having moved a vote of censure upon the Government in respect of treaties lately concluded with Russia and Hesse Cassel which might have the effect of involving the nation in continental wars, Chesterfield, who approved of the treaty with Russia whilst disliking the other, spoke with more than his usual warmth, and all his usual wit, in its support. The effort proved too much for his enfeebled strength. Scarcely had he concluded when faintness overcame him, and he had to be carried home long before the end of the debate. "It very nearly annihilated me," was his own

<sup>1</sup> Letter 334, Bradshaw, p. 1129.

version of the incident ; nor did he ever figure prominently in the House again, save when two years afterwards he succeeded in bringing Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle to a mutual understanding. Meantime, however, the influence of this indefatigable old man continued to make itself felt in the highest quarters. The unseemly quarrel in the royal family had reached a stage at which it threatened to become a public scandal. It was the King's desire to remove the Prince of Wales, afterwards George III, from the control of his mother, the Princess Dowager, as the latter was strongly opposed to a projected marriage ardently wished for by His Majesty between the young prince and a daughter of the House of Brunswick. Various reasons were alleged by the Princess for her dislike to the match—a dislike which, by the way, she managed to communicate to her son ; but the most probable was a dread that her influence over the Prince would be thereby diminished, whilst the King had apparently no other object than to see the important question of the boy's marriage settled before his own death. Under the guidance of Bute and Dodington the Princess identified herself with the Opposition, and the old variance between the Courts of St. James's Palace and Leicester House blazed up afresh. In his chagrin the King resorted for advice to his old counsellor, Chesterfield, through whose instrumentality a compromise was effected which—though rather one-sided, for it left victory with the Princess—obviated the necessity for what Chesterfield very properly dreaded, “an open breach in the royal family, and, still worse, the matter being referred to Parliament.” The King agreed to settle £40,000 a year on the Prince, at the same time ordering that apartments should be provided for him at Kensington and St. James's, but not making severance from his mother a condition of the gift ; and as Chesterfield remarked, it being not very material under which roof the Prince was to sleep, he remained at Leicester House.

No more was heard of the Brunswick match, and the Princess appeared to have triumphed all along the line; but worse disasters were thereby averted, and upon the whole Chesterfield's advice was sound and his success unequivocal.

His retirement from the sphere of active politics had appeased the wakeful jealousy of the Duke of Newcastle to such an extent that the latter's good offices were now always at his service. No more welcome proof of this could have been given than the appointment, already mentioned, of his *fainéant* son to be Minister at Hamburg, which the King consented to, at the Duke's instance, with quite unusual cordiality. "The King ordered me," writes Newcastle, "to tell your lordship that he was extremely glad of an opportunity of doing this or anything that should be agreeable to you, and of showing the real sense he has of your lordship's affection and zeal for his person and government." To which the delighted father responds: "What shall I, what can I say to express my gratitude for His Majesty's extreme goodness to me in the great favour which he has been pleased to do to Mr. Stanhope? . . . I have now nothing left to ask for in the world. . . . I would have the honour of making His Majesty a most dutiful and grateful bow at Kensington, but indeed I am not able." No more he was. To travel occasionally by easy stages from Blackheath to Bath and back again was an exertion forced upon him by his sufferings, and it was the utmost that he could accomplish. A journey from Blackheath to London, followed by the fatigue of a Court reception, would have been quite out of the question at a time when he described himself as "a deaf, solitary, sick man." Writing to Sir Thomas Robinson at this period, he bewails: "Since I saw you I have not had an hour's health, the returns of my vertigoes and subsequent weakness and languor grow both stronger and more frequent, and, in short, I exist to no

one good purpose of life, and therefore do not care how soon so useless and tiresome an existence ceases entirely." Yet in spite of this doleful wail his existence was protracted for nearly a score of years longer, and to some good purpose, too, as after events showed.

## XI

### OLD AGE—SECLUSION—DEATH

WHEN Lord Chesterfield announced in 1755 that *Public Life and he were "parted for ever,"*<sup>1</sup> it is very probable that he believed the end of his busy life to be fast approaching; and, as a rule, such prophecies may be trusted to fulfil themselves when, as in his case, the prophet happens to be nearing his grand climacteric. But that wayward destiny which has often been noticed as interfering with his calculations again intervened, and for almost another score of years he was left to battle with his ailments before they finally subdued him. Into the details of that lingering passage from Time to Eternity it is not proposed to enter circumstantially here. So long as the state of his health and energies sufficed to render him capable of active exertion in the public interests of that country which he served so devotedly, there was reason to chronicle his doings. Even when consistent exertion in the same good cause was denied him, and his dormant energies were only roused occasionally into activity by the agency of some strong external stimulus, such transient revivals might not pass unnoticed. But it would only be a morbid curiosity that could desire to penetrate unnecessarily the obscurity of his sick-room, and to lay bare the sufferings of his decrepitude. If, like Charles II, he apologized for being "such an unconscionable time in dying"; if he declared that he was "only walking about

<sup>1</sup> Page 325, *ante*.



to save his funeral expenses"; if, when challenged by a country friend who met him in St. James Street, accompanied by a brother peer of about equal age, he replied, "Not so loud! The fact is that Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, only we don't wish it to be generally known," let us honour his manly reticence, and respect the seclusion which he coveted when no longer able to contribute his quota to the pleasures of society. On those rare occasions when he emerges into daylight once more it will be within our province to notice the fact; otherwise, there would be no excuse for intruding upon his self-chosen retirement, and thus repeating what has been said before.

Having taken his fill of pleasure as a young man, Chesterfield had now, according to Nature's retributive law, to undergo the penalty, which to other unpleasant features added that of being extended over an unusually long term of years. Even before he had reached middle life, his debilitated constitution had given him repeated warnings of what he had to expect; so that while still comparatively young he was forced to avail himself of those transient placebos which home and foreign "health resorts" offer to their votaries. But in later life he was obliged to resort almost habitually to such places as Bath, Spa, and Aix-la-Chapelle for such alleviations as they afforded. Physical pain he bore with undaunted heroism; but the gradual deprivation of the senses of sight and hearing occasionally extorted a very subdued wail from the old man, whose chief solace all his life long had lain in reading and conversation. Nor were there wanting other disorders of a more painful nature to embitter his declining years. The "infirmities" referred to we find, as before mentioned, to have been principally what he describes as "goutish rheumatism, or a rheumatic gout," for the treatment of which "the learned insisted upon his going to Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa, which they promised would restore his health and spirits." But, in subsequent

letters, he complains of giddiness and disorder in his head, and of the Spa waters having given him but what the builders call "a half-reprieve, which is only a new temporary vamp." At last things came to a crisis, and the close of 1755 witnessed his last appearance but one in Parliament, when (on 10 December) he took part in a debate on a motion for a vote of censure on two treaties which, as already stated, had been concluded with the Empress of Russia and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, whereby there was a danger of England becoming involved in a continental war. In writing of it to Dayrolles (on the 19th of the same month) he says that the House of Lords "sat one day last week till past ten at night ; but I was not able to sit it out, and left it at seven, more than half dead ; for I took it into my head to speak to them for near an hour, which fatigue, together with the heat of the House, very nearly annihilated me." He never visited the House again, save once, when (in 1757) he appeared there to assist in promoting that junction between Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle which was principally brought about by his efforts, and to which we find him frequently alluding "as a marriage of convenience, attended with some drawbacks and more advantages."

His efforts to heal the breach in the royal family were meanwhile incessant. On the question of the "allowance" which should be made to the Prince of Wales, we find him siding with the King, who had sought his advice ;<sup>1</sup> and in conformity with that advice His Majesty sent the Prince an intimation that £40,000 a year would be settled upon him ; that the apartments at Kensington Palace which had been occupied by the late Prince of Wales, and those of the Queen at St. James's Palace, were to be fitted up for him. The Prince accepted the allowance, but remained at Leicester House, "out of consideration for his mother," as he alleged, though it was well known that he did not live

<sup>1</sup> *Newcastle Papers.*

with her either in town or country.<sup>1</sup> However, as he attained his majority almost immediately after, the parental authority did not persevere with the former stipulation regarding her. During the whole of the negotiations between the parties to this arrangement, Lord Chesterfield remained at Blackheath: "crawling upon the face of the earth and weary of, but not murmuring at, his disagreeable situation, though *isolé* from his friends and acquaintance." These services were recognized in the way most acceptable to the old man's heart by the appointment of his son to be Resident at Hamburg; but in other respects he owns to have had a poor time, as we find him writing to Sir Thomas Robinson (13 October, 1756): "Since I saw you I have not had an hour's health, the returns of my vertigoes and subsequent weaknesses and languor grow both stronger and more frequent, and, in short, I exist to no one good purpose of life, and therefore do not care how soon so useless and tiresome an existence ceases entirely." Still he is cheery and on the whole contented, and evidently thinks he might be worse off but for his enforced seclusion, as he says in a letter (of 26 November in the same year) to Dayrolles: "I heartily pity the King and the kingdom, who are both made the sport of private interest and ambition. I most frequently and heartily congratulate and applaud myself for having got out of that *galère*, which has since been so ridiculously tossed. . . . I now quietly behold the storm from the shore . . . it is very indifferent to me what minister shall give me the last *coup de grace*."

Describing to his son (4 November) the way in which he spent his time, he says: "I read a good deal, and vary occasionally my dead company. I converse with grave folios in the morning, while my head is clearest and my attention strongest; I take up less severe quartos after dinner; and at night I choose the mixed company and amusing chit-chat of octavos and duodecimos. *Je tire*

<sup>1</sup> *Dodington's Diary*, 2 June, 1756.

*parti de tout ce que je puis ;* that is my philosophy ; and I mitigate, as much as I can, my physical ills by diverting my attention to other objects."

Enough has been already said of his bodily sufferings and the calm resignation with which he bore them to show that he was not given to reproaching Providence for visiting him with evils which were mainly due to the excesses of his youth. That, indeed, he was far from maintaining such an impious attitude towards the Almighty Dispenser of both mercy and justice is evident from that confidential letter addressed by him (on 18 November, 1752) to his old friend Dr. Chevenix (Bishop of Waterford), in which he says : " I stay here [at Bath] a fortnight longer, in hopes of more benefit, which my physician promises me strongly ; as I do not expect it, if I receive it, it will be the more welcome. If not, I have both philosophy and religion enough to submit to my fate without either melancholy or murmur ; for though I can by no means account why there is either moral or physical evil in the world, yet, conscious of the narrow bands of human understanding, and convinced of the wisdom and justice of the Eternal Divine Being who placed them here, I am persuaded it is fit and right they should be here." This from a man who is regarded by most people as a thoroughgoing atheist seems pretty strong evidence to the contrary ; and is borne out by many similar utterances which we refrain from quoting. Though, like Voltaire, he warred with "creeds," it was simply because he regarded them as fetters of the human soul contrived by fallible mortals who arrogated to themselves the right to prescribe what their fellow-mortals may, or may not, believe ; and consequently, for them he had little regard. But with those underlying principles of revelation and of conscience by which men were naturally guided he was in absolute agreement, and treated them with the utmost respect, if not always with sufficient veneration.

Now that he was no longer regarded as a rival, he remained the cherished counsellor of the Duke of Newcastle, who seems to have consulted him upon every difficulty which arose, as they did pretty frequently, between himself and Pitt, difficulties which, for the time being, were somehow always surmounted by his adroitness. He tells the Duke: "You know I have no personal partiality to Mr. Pitt, but I think he would be the most useful Secretary of State for you of any man in England at this time." The advice was taken, and Lord Bute managed Pitt with an adroitness which smoothed over that particular difficulty. For all this the Duke professed himself very grateful. He says (in a letter of 3 June, 1757): "I can never sufficiently thank your lordship for your goodness and partiality to me. The King and your Country have great obligations to you for your zeal and endeavours for the Publick service in this instance as well as upon all other occasions." Chesterfield advised him to lie low for the present, and wait to see how things would turn out; adding in his dry way: "When there is nothing good to be done, the best way is to do nothing, and *voir venir*." The prudence of this counsel was soon manifested, for after a few weeks the new Ministry was settled by the inclusion of Pitt and Fox; though in writing to Dayrolles, he does not augur favourably of the union with Pitt. He says: "I look upon His Grace and Pitt to be rather married than united; the former will be a very jealous husband, and the latter a very haughty, imperious wife. However, as things are constituted they must go on together, for it is ruin to both to part."<sup>1</sup> Then to Dr. Chevenix he confides a little later, as we have seen (22 November): "Physical ills are the taxes laid upon this wretched life; some are taxed higher, and some lower, but all pay something. My philosophy teaches me to reflect

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 4 July, 1757.

how much higher, rather than how much lower, I might have been taxed." A truly philosophical reflection.

That, notwithstanding his ailments, he occasionally exercised the duties of hospitality, is shown by a note preserved by Cunningham<sup>1</sup> (dated simply "Blackheath, Sunday"), evidently written about this time: "Lord Chesterfield presents his compliments to Mr. Mallet, and he will be extremely glad to see him and Monsieur de Bussy at dinner next Wednesday; but he desires Mr. Mallet to inform Monsieur de Bussy previously that Lord Chesterfield has been dead these twelve years, and has lost all the advantages of flesh and blood, without acquiring any of the singular privileges of a spirit." And in a letter of 2 September, 1757, Walpole has a remark which hints at the price which such amenities must have cost him: "My lord Chesterfield is relapsed; he sent Lord Bath [Pulteney] word lately that he was grown very lean and very deaf: the other replied, that he could lend him some fat, and should be glad at any time to lend him an ear." We can imagine the invalid chuckling over this repartee, so much in his own style; for, up to the very last, he never lost his appreciation of "a good thing"; in fact, as Walpole said of him, "he had the despondence of an old man and the wit of a young one."<sup>2</sup> The former quality is not much in evidence, except at certain depressing recurrences of his symptoms when human nature could not be repressed. Thus in June, 1758, he writes to his son: "I have been worse since my last letter . . . *tant va la cruche à l'eau*; and I have been there very often." And at the end of the following October he talks of "running my crazy body to London, which is the most convenient place either to live or die in"; and again, "Take care of your health as much as you can; for *to be*, or *not to be*, is a question of much less importance, in my mind, than *to be*, or *not to be*, well."

<sup>1</sup> *Walpole Correspondence*, vol. III, p. 8 n.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.

In his next letter (of 15 December) to his son occurs a passage which may well strike with amused wonderment those accustomed to the yearly budgets of modern Chancellors of the Exchequer:—"The estimates for the expenses of the year 1759 are made up; I have seen them: and what do you think they amount to? No less than 12 millions, three hundred thousand pounds! A most incredible sum, and yet already all subscribed, and some more offered. The unanimity in the House of Commons in voting such a sum and such givers both by sea and land, is not less astonishing. This is Mr. Pitt's doing, *and it is marvellous in our eyes.*" The reader may well marvel when he finds what a return the country was supposed to get for the money so provided; and this he can ascertain by referring to Smollett's analysis of the Budget. It included 60,000 men for the sea service; 52,553, besides 50,000 auxiliaries, five battalions for service in America and Africa, and the maintenance of garrisons in the plantations, Gibraltar, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Providence, Cape Breton, and Senegal. Charges for ordnance and extraordinary service; half-pay to sea officers; the support of Greenwich Hospital, and of the act-pensioners of Chelsea College; pay for the expenses of foreign troops in the pay of Great Britain, over and above £60,000 for enabling the King to fulfil his engagement with the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, and an additional grant of £80,000 for a like purpose; £15,000 for repairing London Bridge; £40,000 for the Foundling Hospital; £668,000 for charge of transports, £36,000 for various charges, £90,000 for the militia, and £467,000 for extraordinary expenses relating to the land power; £1,000,000 for enabling the King to defray any extraordinary expense of the war, and some quarter of a million for other expenses<sup>1</sup>—the total amounting to £12,761,310 19s. 5d., which gives food for reflection in these times.

<sup>1</sup> Hume and Smollett (ed. 1825), vol. XIII, pp. 16-21.

It is pleasant to find from his correspondence that his own personal sufferings did not render him indifferent to those of others, and that he was a kind and thoughtful master to those who had grown old or infirm in his service. Thus, in writing to the Bishop of Waterford, he alludes to "poor White" as having been very ill, and explains that "we were young and healthy together: we are old and crazy, and seem to be tending to our last stage together"; but that he did not dispense with the old retainer on that account is shown by a letter written six years later to the same prelate, in which he says: "Our poor friend White is in a most declining way and I fear will not last much longer. He has now lived with me about fifty years, and served me very faithfully. I shall feel the loss of him very sensibly." Writing of himself at the beginning of the following year (22 January, 1760), he tells the same old friend: "I have within these few months more than once seen death very near; and when one does see it near, let the best or the worst people say what they please, it is a very serious consideration. I thank God I saw it without very great terror; but, at the same time, the divine attribute of mercy, which gives us comfort, cannot make us forget, nor ought it, His attribute of justice, which must blend some fears with our hopes. . . . Whether my end be more or less remote, I know I am tottering upon the brink of this world, and my thoughts are employed about this. However, while I crawl upon this planet, I think myself obliged to do what good I can in my narrow domestic sphere to my fellow-creatures, and to wish them all the good I cannot do."<sup>1</sup>

It was about this time, as Mr. Ernst points out,<sup>2</sup> that we have the first mention of the Philip Stanhope (his godson) who afterwards became his heir and the fifth Earl of Chesterfield. Writing to Arthur Charles Stanhope, the father of the boy, about the then projected marriage of

<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, vol. III, p. 1263.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst, p. 515.





PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, FOURTH EARL OF CHESTERFIELD  
*After Gainsborough*



the Earl's brother, Sir William Stanhope, he assures him that "in all events I shall have the same concern and attention for *Sturdy* [the boy's pet name] that I have hitherto had . . . and while I live, grudge no trouble nor expense for his education."<sup>1</sup> Save for the Earl's letters to this boy after the death of his own son, there is little by which his godson should be remembered. When he came to the title he pulled down the old family mansion of Bretby, erecting in its place a modern structure by Wyatt, in which he died on 29 August, 1815. His godfather's instructions were, it is to be feared, altogether wasted upon him; as Madame D'Arblay, who was not given to be censorious to persons of rank, describes him in her *Diary* as having "as little good-breeding as any man I ever met."<sup>2</sup> It was for the forgery of his name to a bond for £4000 that the celebrated Dr. Dodd (who had been his tutor) was hanged in 1777.

Mr. Ernst has also drawn attention to the curious fact of there being no mention in Lord Chesterfield's letters of the death of George II, which occurred suddenly on 25 October, 1760. Considering the terms upon which he had so long been associated with the King's earlier life, the omission seems unaccountable. Nor does he appear to have been present at either the marriage or the coronation of George III and Queen Charlotte, which took place in the following year. He writes the Bishop of Waterford: "I have not seen our new Queen yet; and, as for the coronation, I am not alive enough to march, nor dead enough to *walk* at it." The subject which chiefly engaged his attention was the unsatisfactory relations between the Duke of Newcastle and Pitt, which ended in the latter resigning office. In a letter to the Duke, Lord Chesterfield condoled with him on the "elopement" of his wife; and after pointing out the consequences likely to ensue from Pitt's account of the motives which induced him to resign, "You

<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, vol. III, p. 1262.

<sup>2</sup> *Diary*, vol. V, p. 92.

know the violent passions of your last wife too well to think that the obligation of serving in the Cabinet Council will stop her mouth." Then, "For God's sake why are not Mr. Pitt's passions tacked inseparably to a peerage for himself? [alluding to the fact that Pitt on his resignation accepted a peerage for his wife together with a pension of £3000 a year for their lives]. For if he had been told properly that he must have both or neither, I daresay he would have accepted both together." We also find him displaying a keen interest in the government of Ireland. Commenting on the speech made by the new Viceroy at the opening of the Irish Parliament, he says: "He dwells upon my three favourite points—the Protestant Church Schools; the linen manufacturers; and a proper indulgence of the silly Roman Catholics,"<sup>1</sup> and in a subsequent letter (of 8 July, 1762) to the same person he repeats the advice he had so often given to the Irish: "Mind your weaving and spinning, and lay aside your politics: the former will enrich you, but, take my word for it, you will never be the better for the latter. I wish I could see your great politicians labouring for the good of their country, like Hercules, with distaff, instead of Septennial Bills, in their hands. What, and so be dependent upon England? says Mr. Lucas. Yes, I hope so; for when Ireland is no longer dependent upon England, the Lord have mercy upon it!"

As years passed on, the Earl's hold of life sensibly weakened. In a letter written to his son (22 April, 1765) he says: "I feel a gradual decay, though a gentle one: and I think I shall not trouble, but slide gently to the bottom of the hill of life. When that will be, I neither know nor care, for I am very weary"; and writing in August of the same year he tells him: "I feel this beginning of the Autumn, which is already very cold: the leaves are withered, fall apace, and seem to intimate that I must follow them; which I shall do without reluctance, being

<sup>1</sup> To Bishop of Waterford (31 October, 1761).

extremely weary of this silly world." Yet he was fated to outlive the person addressed; for his son's health had also been declining, and he died of a dropsy at Avignon on 16 November, 1768. His death was announced to Lord Chesterfield by a lady who informed him that she had for several years been married to the deceased, by whom she had two sons, who were then with her. Whatever may have been his feelings, the Earl did not dispute her claim, but at once charged himself with the education and maintenance of her boys; and the only unpleasantness manifested on the occasion was between Mrs. Stanhope and her mother-in-law by courtesy, Madame du Bouchet, who was dissatisfied with the manner in which the funeral of Mr. Stanhope had been conducted. The effect of this revelation upon the old Earl was more considerable than he gave people to suppose, and was almost wholly shown by his increasing infirmities. The long-threatened loss of sight became a more pressing danger than ever, owing to a stubborn inflammation of the eyes, which, as Dr. Maty says, "frequently deprived him of the only comfort he had left." And in a letter to General Irvine he complains: "My eyes are still so bad that they are of little use to a deaf man, who lived by reading alone; many other physical ills crowd upon me, and I have drained Pandora's box without finding hope at the bottom." His handwriting, too, gave evidence of the general decay; for, as Dr. Maty points out, the originals of some of his letters about this time were written in a very trembling hand, and some of them are evidently in the handwriting of another person. "This," concludes the Doctor, "goes no further than the latter end of 1771, I am informed from private authority."

In spite of his discouraging former expressions we find him as sanguine as ever with regard to his ready adopted godson. He writes (12 March, 1766, to the Bishop of Waterford): "My kinsman, Mr. Stanhope of Mansfield,

has married a girl of five and twenty; himself sexagenary. . . . His son, whom I have taken and adopted, turns out prodigiously well both as to parts and learning, and gives me great amusement and pleasure in superintending his education, and in some things instructing him myself, in which I flatter myself that I do some good, considering his future rank and fortune." These instructions are pursued in the letters to his godson during the period from 1761 to 1770, a collection edited by Lord Carnarvon; and whether we agree or not with the high comparative estimate placed upon them by his latest biographer, there is no doubt that they exhibit many of the excellences which characterize those to his own son.

In the autumn of 1770 his ailments seem to have become very intense, for he writes to the Bishop of Waterford (15 August): "There is no relief for the miseries of a crazy old age but patience, and as I have many of Job's ills, I thank God I have some of his patience too; and I consider my present wretched old age as a just compensation for the follies, not to say sins, of my youth." Gradually they became worse, until in his last letter to Dayrolles (from Blackheath, 14 September, 1772) he mentions for the first time the infirmity which eventually proved more than his enfeebled constitution could sustain. "It is now four months," he says, "since I have been labouring under a diarrhœa, which our common doctor Warren<sup>1</sup> has not been able to cure. To be nearer him and all other helps, I shall settle in town this day fortnight, which is the best place for sick people, or well people, to reside at, for health, business, or pleasure." For another half-year his wonderful vitality enabled him to withstand the approach of death, but the end came on 24 March, 1773. "He remained to the last free from all manner of pain," says Dr. Maty, "enjoying his surprising memory and presence of mind to his latest breath :

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Warren was physician to the King.

perfectly composed and resigned to part with life. Upon the morning of his decease, and about half an hour before it happened, Mr. Dayrolles called upon him to make his usual visit. When he had entered the room, the *valet de chambre*, opening the curtains of the bed, announced Mr. Dayrolles to his lordship. The Earl found strength enough, in a faint voice, to say, ‘*Give Dayrolles a chair.*’ Those were the last words he was heard to speak.”

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Having regard to the following clause in the deceased Earl’s will—“Satiated with the pompous follies of this life of which I have had an uncommon share I would have no posthumous ones displayed at my funeral, and therefore desire to be buried in the next burying-place to the place where I shall die, and limit the whole expenses of my funeral to £100”—his remains were at first interred in Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, London; but were afterwards removed to the family burying-place at Shelford.<sup>1</sup>

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The will itself<sup>2</sup> (dated 4 June, 1772) is rather a portentous document, covering seven “skins” of parchment, with a codicil (dated 11 February, 1773). The executors were his brother-in-law, General Sir Charles Hotham, Bart., K.B.; the brother of the latter, Beaumont Hotham, Esq., of the Temple; and Lovel Stanhope, Esq. The form of its commencement, which is evidently suggested by that of his friend Lord Bolingbroke’s will, runs as follows:—

“I, Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, seriously considering the uncertainty of human life in the best, and

<sup>1</sup> See note at page 40, *ante*.

<sup>2</sup> A copious extract from it is given in the July number of *The Gentleman’s Magazine* for 1773, vol. XLIII, p. 317.

more particularly of my own in my declining state of health, do while in a sound state of mind make this my last Will and Testament intending to dispose of all my worldly affairs, not as humour may prompt but as justice and equity seem to direct. I most humbly recommend my soul to the extensive mercy of that Eternal Supreme and Intelligent Being who gave it me, most earnestly at the same time deprecating his justice." (Here follow the directions for his funeral given above.) All his property in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Derbyshire, and Nottinghamshire is left to his godson Philip, son of Arthur Stanhope, and his assigns for life, together with the clear yearly sum of £2500 for his maintenance and education during his minority, to enable him to travel in France, Germany, Flanders, Holland, and the Northern Courts, but by no means into Italy, "which I look upon now to be the sink of illiberal manners and vices": (Francis, Earl of Huntingdon, being appointed his guardian); and to the same Philip is also left, as an heirloom to go with the title of Earl of Chesterfield, "the diamond ring left me by the late Duchess of Marlborough." To each of the two sons (Charles and Philip) of his deceased son he leaves £100 yearly during their minority, and afterwards the interest of £10,000, a moiety of the corpus to be paid to each on his attaining the age of twenty-one. To the natural son of his brother, Sir William Stanhope, an annuity of £100 for life. To Mrs. Ilsley, widow, £25 a year for life; to William Strickland, "my old and faithful servant," 50 guineas; and to Jacob Ubret, "my old groom, who has lived with me above 40 years, 40 guineas, if they are in my service at my death." Also: "I give to all my menial or household servants that shall have lived with me five years or upwards at the time of my death, whom I consider as unfortunate friends, my equals by Nature, and my inferiors only by the difference of our positions, two years' wages above what shall be due to them at my death,



and mourning; and to all my other menial servants one year's wages and mourning." To his widow, Lady Chesterfield, he gives £1000 a year for life and the use of his house in Curzon Street and South Audley Street (which he held on a long term at the rent of £100 a year); also, for her life, his rose-diamond ring—all to be held by her in trust for his godson, Philip Stanhope. These and the bequest to "Mrs. Elizabeth du Bouchet," which has been already noticed,<sup>1</sup> may be said to complete the division of the property; but there is a remarkable and characteristic condition attached, "that in case my said godson Philip Stanhope should at any time hereafter keep or be concerned in the keeping of any race horse or race horses or pack or packs of hounds, or reside one night at Newmarket, that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill-manners, during the course of the races there, or shall resort to the said races, or shall lose in any one day at any games or bet whatever the sum of £500 there; and in any of the cases aforesaid, it is my express will that he my said godson shall forfeit and pay out of my estate the sum of £5000 to and for the use of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster." The stringency with which this clause is drawn is no less remarkable than the selection of the parties by whom the penalty would be enforced, whose names he declared that he had inserted "because he felt sure that if the penalty should be incurred they would not be remiss in claiming it." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> See Preface to Lord Mahon's collection of the *Letters*, p. xix.

## XII

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**W**HETHER the task undertaken in these pages of considering Lord Chesterfield from a point of view which has not hitherto been specially selected—that of his claim to be regarded as one of the most able, careful, and conscientious statesmen who ever served this country—has been successfully accomplished or not, it may at least be the means of directing the attention of persons more competent than the present writer to guide public opinion into a fairer estimate of his claims to appreciation upon higher grounds than those upon which he is usually judged. No one, indeed, disputes his claim to be regarded as a representative of the eighteenth century in its social, political, and, though in a lesser degree, its literary character ; but he was something more than this. In an age when, as one of its chief exponents confessed, “every man had his price,” Chesterfield was not to be bought by either money or preferment. Twice he declined a dukedom ; nor was the only distinction that he ever asked for—the Order of the Garter—sufficient, when conferred, to purchase his support of the administration which strove thereby to purchase his allegiance. With all his faults, and they were many, he never sold himself ; and even his detractors admitted that he never abused his office as a means of personal aggrandizement. That he helped his friends is true ; in fact, he acknowledged on several occasions—and notably in connection with the Irish Viceroyalty—that one reason why he accepted preferment



*I. K. Sherwin Sculpt.  
From a Bust in the British Museum*



was that he might be able to provide for some "little people" in whom he felt an interest ; but who can point to any eminent statesman free from this amiable weakness? And the cases in which this patronage was condemned are very rare indeed. Upon the whole, then, he may fairly be described as an exceptional instance of political purity in a degenerate age, when corruption and jobbery were the rule, not the exception. That, apart from this, he should be considered a representative of the age in which he lived is true enough, though destructive perhaps of his claims to true greatness. Those whose testimony is best worth having acknowledge that he rose to the highest level of his time. Corroborated, as to Lord Macaulay's opinion—that he "lost by the publication of his letters"<sup>1</sup>—by others of nearly equal weight, it shows pretty conclusively that both in intellectual and practical performances Chesterfield had reached the high-water mark of his era ; yet it may be doubted if even this eminence did not fall short of true greatness. For a man to be accounted really *great* something more is wanted. He must not only be "the creature of his age," but must, so to speak, project himself beyond it—must carry the age with him into a higher plane of civilization ; and this it can hardly be said with truth that Chesterfield did, or tried to do. He seems to have been perfectly satisfied with the standard of life as he found it, and to have aimed simply at reaching the highest level of that standard. The world as it existed was for him the best of all possible worlds ; and, beyond trying to remedy some of its most obvious inconveniences, he seemed content to leave it as it was. That any of those men who are deservedly reputed "great" would, in the same circumstances, have been equally satisfied with their surroundings is very questionable.

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<sup>1</sup> See Lord Macaulay's letter to Mr. Napier, cited at pp, 215, 216 of *Four Centuries of English Letters*, edited and arranged by W. B. Scoones (3rd Ed.).

He whom Wordsworth pronounced to be "the last good English writer before Johnson came in to vitiate the language," whom Landor thought "in regard of style, one of the best of our writers," whom Voltaire rated highly in a literary capacity, whom Sainte-Beuve recognized as "the English Rochefoucauld," and whom the French Academy felt bound to number amongst its members, must clearly be entitled to a high rank in the world of letters; and to a certain extent this has been accorded him by general consent, though it must be owned that his literary reputation is in most cases rather taken for granted than subscribed to from conviction. In regard to style, indeed, few will be inclined to detract from Landor's view, given above. Taken as a whole, and allowing for occasional inaccuracies, which are obviously mere slips of the pen, it deserves to be ranked as pure, crisp, nervous English, far different from that vile mixture prevalent among the writers of his time, which consisted, as he himself described it in a letter to his son,<sup>1</sup> of "Latinisms, Gallicisms, Germanisms, and all *isms* but Anglicism." "The style of Chesterfield," says a most intelligent critic,<sup>2</sup> "is the finished expression — not of rhetorical culture, but of the culture by which all that constitutes character is marked . . . absolutely unaffected, simply original, and without mannerisms of any kind, it is a style which no mechanical skill could have attained and which no mechanical skill can copy. . . . In two respects the diction of Chesterfield is especially notable—in its exquisite finish, and in its scrupulous purity. It is the perfection of epistolary style, flexibly adapting itself to what is supposed or suggested—now heated, pointed, epigrammatic; now gracefully diffuse, now rising to dignity; but always natural and always easy. Though he abhorred pedantry, Cicero and Pollio were not more scrupulous purists in Latinity than Chesterfield in the use of English."

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 16 April, 1759 (Bradshaw, vol. III, p. 1253).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. John Churton Collins' *Essays and Studies*, p. 259 *et seq.*

That this is very just criticism will be acknowledged by all who have read the *Miscellaneous Works*; though it seems to overlook a remarkable characteristic of Chesterfield's art—his economy of language. As in pictorial art the draughtsman who produces the effect at which he aims with the smallest expenditure of means is valued accordingly, there seems to be no sufficient reason why a similar test of merit should not apply to the art of literary men who eschew all unnecessary verbiage; and if so, Chesterfield would be entitled to very high rank indeed as a *stylist*. This remark, it must be confessed, does not always apply to his literary remains; but it does apply in a great measure to his *Letters*, and to such of his other works, curiously enough, as were not intended for general perusal. In the essays which he contributed to the periodical literature of the day, and which, as the work of so distinguished a man, had an extraordinary *succès d'estime*, he does not seem to rise much above the ordinary level of the craft, and certainly compares disadvantageously with the work of Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, etc. etc. But it was to his mastery of this art of condensation that he owes the undisputed position of being one of the finest *epigrammatists* that ever lived. Take, for example, the well-known story, how an incident was being discussed in a general company of which he was one—that of the recent marriage of a meanly-born *parvenu* to the daughter of an only too celebrated lady; and of somebody asking Lord Chesterfield what it was that seemed to cause the party such amusement. His lordship's reply was simply: "*Nobody's son has married Everybody's daughter.*" If there be a neater *bon mot*<sup>1</sup> than this, which describes a most complicated situation so exactly in half a dozen words, and without a superfluous syllable, it has yet to be discovered. Nor, in this respect at least, is the impromptu

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, it is not an "epigram," having regard to etymology; but in other respects it has all the characteristics of one.

couplet which he at once supplied on being importuned by a very tall and very stupid personage, nicknamed "the Long," to write some verses on the man himself, much inferior :—

Unlike my subject, now shall be my song :  
It shall be witty, and it shan't be long.

Or his unfeeling *not* when told that the same personage was "dying by inches," and in allusion to his stature remarked : "If that be so, he has still a good while to live." Whatever may be the relative merit of these witticisms, they all coincide in possessing that rare quality of terseness alluded to. The last two are distinctly inferior to the first in pure wit, and besides are disfigured by what at any rate looks like personal feeling, which is seldom the case with a true epigram ; but they are fine specimens of their kind nevertheless.

As a versifier—he never claimed to be a poet—he evinced considerable dexterity. A good ear, the command of a copious vocabulary, and an intimate acquaintance with all the topics of fashionable conversation, qualified him for the composition of those *vers de société*, topical songs, addresses, and epigrams beyond which he rarely ventured. Of the exalted poetic spirit there is nothing in evidence, though he occasionally indulged in metaphor and simile compounded in the accepted "classical" style, as when, for instance, in the otherwise somewhat prosaic "Advice to a Lady in Autumn," he counsels her thus :—

The dews of the evening most carefully shun—  
Those tears of the sky for the loss of the sun,

a conceit which somehow reminds one of Moore, perhaps because it was written in Ireland.

The song "When Fanny, Blooming Fair," is one of the best things attributed to him, though on insufficient grounds.<sup>1</sup> And the "Molly Lepel" ballad, which he wrote in conjunction with Pulteney, Earl of Bath, is a triumph of

<sup>1</sup> See note at p. 378 of Mr. Ernst's *Wit and Wisdom of Lord Chesterfield*.



versification, though a disgrace to its eminent composers, and an insult to one of the most charming and estimable women of her time.<sup>1</sup> Pulteney's reputation was such that one may hope the coarser parts were written by him; but apart from its fertility of rhyme and rollicking versification, it does little credit to its composers. One is not surprised to learn, from a letter of Dr. Arbuthnot to Swift, that the fair subject was "in a little sort of a miff about a ballad that was writ on her, to the tune of Molly Mogg, and sent to her in the name of a begging poet"; though her prudence may be questioned, in appealing to the "begging poet" to change two *double entendres*—the answer to her request being simply that the *double entendres* were "changed to single *entendres*" by the chivalrous authors. Upon the whole, Chesterfield's muse was but a skittish hoyden, lacking much in dignity, and even decency, and not a whit better than her frail sisters who were courted rather assiduously by the *beaux esprits* of fashionable society in his time, a muse whose outpourings are not likely to enhance a reputation founded on much better work.

Some of what may be styled his casual essays display him at his best. That upon the clergy is a well-written and, upon the whole, fair and appreciative estimate of an order with whom he is supposed to have had little sympathy. It concludes with a forecast which, at the time, was fully justified, but the prescience of which is now happily weakened. The "Dialogues" between Horace and Dr. Bentley, and between Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and Sir John Cutler, well deserve perusal for their pungency of wit and grace of style. Both were printed for the first time in Lord Mahon's edition, and are given in Mr. Ernst's *Wit and Wisdom of Lord Chesterfield*.

The general view of mankind, which is usually right in

<sup>1</sup> Lady Hervey.

the long run, has pronounced in favour of the *Letters* as affording the best example of Lord Chesterfield's prose; but some of his contributions to periodical literature have much merit in that respect, if inferior in others. Many of his essays which appeared in *Fog's Journal* and in *Common Sense* are of more than average merit, but his contributions to the *World* attained the widest popularity; in fact, they were at one time quite the rage among people of fashion. In imitation of Bruyere, he wrote a series of "characters" of his contemporaries, in which he appears at his worst and at his best. Lord Bute's "character" is usually considered the best done of any, but those of Lord Bolingbroke, Dr. Arbuthnot, and Lord Scarborough perhaps reflect most credit upon the writer. In his miscellaneous essays one is somehow occasionally reminded of Goldsmith; but, apart from the lucidity of his style and the purity of his English, there is not much ground for thinking that, as a literary man and irrespective of his social prestige, he would ever have obtained a prominent place in literature.

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That the political foresight which is a distinguished quality of the highest class of statesmanship was possessed in an eminent degree by Lord Chesterfield is proved by his actions, speeches, and writings. Even as a young man, though imbued with strong distaste for the Hanoverian Royal Family, and certainly untroubled by religious scruples, he divined how necessary the Protestant Succession was to the security of England, and threw his whole weight on the side that was opposed to his private inclinations. His strenuous support of the efforts made to free that most useful and deserving class of citizens, the Jews, from disabilities of which the absurdity is now generally acknowledged; his speeches in favour of reducing the vindictive penalties for treason, which later on bore fruit; his prognostications of what was likely to follow from our

treatment of the American Colonies;<sup>1</sup> and his wonderfully accurate forecast of an impending Revolution in France, to the approach of which the ordinary world apparently shut its eyes; not to mention his sapient discernment of the reasons and remedies for Ireland's lack of prosperity: all combine to stamp him as the possessor of that rare power of seeing from the standpoint of the present into the dim vista of the future, and of recognizing and advocating the beneficial possibilities which that future contained. We are, in fact, reaping a harvest, without knowing it, of which he scattered the seeds in advance.

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That the present volume has been compiled from authentic records is strictly true so far as the biographical and historical portions are concerned; but as regards the general treatment this statement requires some qualification. For, in dealing with biographical facts it was impossible at times to avoid reference to various and often conflicting views taken of them by the multitude of critics who have expounded their respective estimates of the merits, or demerits, of Lord Chesterfield's actions, speeches, private letters, and contributions to general literature. Bearing this circumstance in mind, the present writer thinks it advisable, when indicating the various authorities which he has consulted for the purpose of this book, to divide them into two classes: (1) The *Historical*, or those which purport to recount the actual facts of Lord Chesterfield's career, gathered from public records and contemporary notices; also from his own correspondence, and the letters and documents of those who lived in his time and knew, or affected to know, his proceedings; and (2) the *Critical*, of which perhaps no explanation is needed. This division is indeed open to an objection which applies to most dichotomies, that the two classes often overlap each other;

<sup>1</sup> Mahon's *History*, vol. V, p. 123; and Coxe's *Life of Walpole*, vol. I, p. 753.

that the historian sometimes becomes a commentator, and vice versa; but confusion of this kind is sometimes unavoidable, and will be condoned.

In the first of these classes Doctor Maty holds a position from which it is impossible to dislodge him—that of being the primary source from which all subsequent biographers of Lord Chesterfield have been, and always will be, compelled to draw much of their information. This pre-eminence is the result of his having been commissioned by the widowed Countess of Chesterfield to undertake the task of compiling the memoirs of her deceased spouse; and for this special purpose he was allowed, under her strict supervision and control, to have access to documentary material the sight of which has never since been vouchsafed to mortal eyes, and indeed most of which is believed to have been destroyed. Meanwhile, however, Mrs. Eugenie Stanhope, widow of the deceased Earl's illegitimate son, had improved her opportunities in a rather discreditable fashion by disposing of the letters written by the father to that son, which had been carefully preserved by the latter, to an enterprising publisher, who lost no time in issuing them, to the Countess's and Dr. Maty's ineffable disgust, we may be pretty sure. In 1774, and long before Dr. Maty's work was finished, her collection appeared in two volumes, subsequent editions of which followed with remarkable frequency. "Extracts" and "Abridgements" from the *Letters* continued to pour from the press, in compliance with the popular demand. They were published in French, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Italian, and naturally had the effect of checking the sale of the larger and more complete work of Dr. Maty, which only appeared in 1777; its second edition (that used by the present writer) not being issued until 1779 goes to prove this,<sup>1</sup> three large editions of Mrs. Stanhope's issue

<sup>1</sup> Its title is as follows:—*Miscellaneous Works of the late Philip Dormer*

having been called for meanwhile in the first six months after its publication. Among his contemporaries who have expatiated at greater or less length upon Lord Chesterfield and his doings a prominent place must be accorded to John, Lord Hervey, who in his *Memoirs of the Reign of George II* deals copiously and virulently with the Earl's reputation. With him must be coupled Horace Walpole, who throughout his *Correspondence* (in nine volumes, edited by Cunningham) shows himself a much fairer adversary. To these may be added *Lady Suffolk's Correspondence*, *The Marchmont Papers*, *Pope's Life and Works* (by Elwin), *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (Croker's edition), *Ballantyne's Life of Carteret*, *The Bedford Correspondence*, *Colley Cibber's Apology*, *Coxe's Walpole*, *Smollett's History of England*, *Bubb Dodington's Diary*, *Letters of Mary Lepel* (Lady Hervey), and a host of others whom it is superfluous to name, as they will readily suggest themselves. A constant flow of editions of the famous *Letters* to the Earl's son, of varying merit and authenticity, had inundated the book market, when fortunately it was superseded by the publication, in 1845, of a new edition, in four volumes, of the *Letters, Characters, etc.*, having for its editor Lord Mahon (afterwards Earl Stanhope), and therefore *ipso facto* authoritative. Under the same editorship followed, in 1853, a fifth volume, consisting of selections from the miscellaneous literary works of Lord Chesterfield, and the whole issue has ever since been regarded so highly that its increasing rarity and cost have placed it beyond the reach of ordinary collectors.

*Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, consisting of Letters to his Friends, never before printed, and various other articles, to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life, tending to illustrate the Civil, Literary, and Political History of his time. By M. Maty, M.D., late Principal Librarian of the British Museum and Secretary to the Royal Society. The Second Edition is in four volumes, with an appendix containing sixteen characters of great personages and Letters written by the same noble Earl. The publisher's imprint is that of Dilly, in the Poultry, London.*

In these circumstances the late Dr. Bradshaw came to the rescue, in 1892, with an excellent edition in three volumes of the entire Chesterfield correspondence, with "Characters"; combining the pith of Lord Mahon's annotations with a good deal of additional information from other sources. This edition being thoroughly reliable, and published at a moderate price, will be found to meet the requirements of most people who are not fastidious collectors, though it should not supersede either Lord Mahon's work referred to, or Lord Carnarvon's admirable production, in 1889, of *Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to his Godson and Successor* (of which a second edition was published in 1890)—the preliminary "memoirs" contained in both editions being particularly valuable. By the gift of the Earl of Chichester to the British Museum, in 1887, of the Newcastle MSS.—which include a number of letters written by Lord Chesterfield to the Duke of Newcastle—an opportunity was afforded of which Mr. Ernst Browning judiciously availed himself, the result being an admirable biography in which, as the writer informs us, the letters which illustrate Lord Chesterfield's career during his Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, and when he came from his retirement to effect a junction between the Duke of Newcastle and Pitt, were for the first time published—thus supplementing Dr. Maty's "Memoir" and that prefaced to Lord Carnarvon's volume. Before the publication of this work the same author had given to the world (in 1875) *The Wit and Wisdom of the Earl of Chesterfield*, being selections from his *Miscellaneous Writings in Prose and Verse*, which, with the third volume of Lord Mahon's *History of England* and Dr. Bradshaw's edition of the *Letters*, provide "the general reader" who does not care to go very deeply into the subject with sufficient information for his purpose.

But the case is different where criticism is concerned. The *Critical* writers are legion; they extend from Chester-

field's own time to the present day, and seem likely to extend into the illimitable future. Every budding magazine writer, every mature essayist at a loss for a subject, is pretty sure at some time or other to succumb to the temptation of setting forth his estimate of Lord Chesterfield's engrossing and many-sided personality. To enumerate all that have done so already is as impossible as it would be to speculate upon all that are likely to do so in the future. The utmost that can be attempted is to select from the mass of lucubrations on the subject a few specimens culled from pages usually closed to writers who have not previously made their mark in some way or other. *The Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly Review*, by a sort of divine right less freely acknowledged perhaps now than in the old days, head the list, and in them Lord Brougham and Mr. Hayward respectively seized the opportunity afforded by the appearance of Lord Mahon's authoritative edition of the *Letters*, in 1845, by contributing two reviews of that work—Lord Brougham to the *Quarterly*, Mr. Hayward to the *Edinburgh*—both reviews appearing in October of the same year. *Blackwood*, for May, 1868, contains an article by Mrs. Oliphant—republished in that lady's *Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II*—which certainly does not err on the side of clemency, nor does Mr. Leslie Stephen's in the *Cornhill* for July, 1871. A more merciful view is taken by Mr. H. B. Baker in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1877, and a highly appreciative and informing one of the *Letters* by Sir M. E. Grant-Duff in the *Fortnightly* for June, 1879. But, in the present writer's opinion, there is none of these articles which is superior to that by Mr. John Churton Collins (in his masterly review of Lord Carnarvon's edition of the *Letters to Lord Chesterfield's Godson*), which is reprinted in that gentleman's *Essays and Studies* (Macmillan, 1895). Next to it, though long preceding it in point of time, may be placed that charming and instructive essay by Sainte-Beuve, written as far back as 1850, in which the French writer exhibits an appreciation

of Lord Chesterfield strangely wanting among the great majority of the latter's own compatriots.

Any attempt at making a complete enumeration of the works which deal more or less perfunctorily with Lord Chesterfield is doomed to failure. He may be said to permeate the whole literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From the historian to the metaphysician; from the lordly critic to the novelist pure and simple, all teem with allusion to him in some shape or other; the difficulty being to find an author who ignores him altogether. Of those who have made the attempt, Mr. Sidney Lee perhaps gives the most copious bibliography in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; but neither it nor the index in the library of the British Museum exhausts the subject. The tentative effort which has been already made in these pages at a classification of Chesterfieldian literature into *Historical* and *Critical* is confessedly defective from overlapping. Thus Walpole and Hervey partake of both characters; and the same may be said of almost the whole *Historical* division, whilst the *Critical* merges often into the speculative, or fiction travesties fact. According to the taste of the reader, he may amuse himself with Cramp's attempt to prove that Lord Chesterfield was the author of the *Letters of Junius*, or that he was the wicked peer indicated by Smollett in *Roderick Random*, or by Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge*.<sup>1</sup> More reliable information regarding him may, however, be gathered from such books as Dilke's *Papers of a Critic* (published in 1875); W. P. Courtney's *Parliamentary Representatives of Cornwall*; Bourke's *History of White's Club*; Elwin's edition of *Pope's Works*; Lady Cowper's charming *Diary*, and other sources duly catalogued in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But, upon the whole, Walpole's *Correspondence*, coupled

<sup>1</sup> A notion that Sir John Chester in *Barnaby Rudge* is meant for Lord Chesterfield seems to have gained currency in some way; but the true state of the case must be evident to readers of chapter xxiii. of that novel.





EFFIGY (DESIGNED BY CIPRIANI, AS THE FRONTISPIECE TO *MATY*, VOL. II.), OF LORD CHESTERFIELD'S WIDOWED COUNTESS, BEING APPARENTLY THE ONLY ENGRAVED REPRESENTATION OF THAT LADY NOW IN EXISTENCE



with his *Memoirs of George II* and his annotations on Maty, will be found of much use to the ordinary reader who is prudent enough to take that gossiping author's remarks with caution. A few extracts from letters of Lord Charlemont which are annexed to the introduction to Dr. Bradshaw's edition of the *Chesterfield Correspondence* also throw, *inter alia*, a somewhat lurid light upon the results of that correspondence as exemplified in the Earl's offspring, even though the statements therein be accepted with tolerable reserve.

THE END



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